

**LOCHSA FACE ROADLESS AREA**

## 1311 - LOCHSA FACE ROADLESS AREA

**TOTAL 73,027 ACRES**

## LOCHSA FACE ROADLESS AREA (01311)

| Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|-------------|-----------|
| 73,027      | 73,027    |

### I. DESCRIPTION

The Lochsa Face Roadless Area is located on the south side of the Lochsa River drainage approximately 77 miles east of Orofino, Idaho, and 60 miles west of Missoula, Montana, via U.S. Highway 12. It is located entirely within the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho County, Idaho.

The area's northern boundary is the Lochsa River. U.S. Highway 12 is located immediately north of the Lochsa River and parallels the area's northern boundary for most of its length. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness forms the southern and western boundaries. The eastern boundary parallels the Tom Beal Park Road.

Access is limited along the northern boundary to foot/horse trails connected to U.S. Highway 12 by three pack bridges and one bridge suitable for motorized travel. Access to the eastern portion is provided by the Tom Beal Peak Road, a low-standard, dirt road. Access from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is provided by foot/horse trails. A total of 12 Forest Service System Trails cross the interior and enter the Wilderness.

The western two-thirds of the Lochsa Face is characterized by steep, stream breakland dissected by relatively steep side-drainages. There are also a limited number of alluvial terraces along the Lochsa River. Above 5,000 feet in this section, rolling upland mountain landforms dominate. In the Stanley Creek drainage, there are also some scoured cirque basin, glaciated landforms.

In the eastern one-third of the unit, from the Warm Springs Creek drainage to the area's eastern boundary, more alluvial terraces along the river can be found. The breaklands along the river become less pronounced and are not as steep as in the western portion. The gradients of the side-drainages also become gentler, and the rolling mountain upland landforms become more dominant. The Robin, Jay, and Cliff Creek drainages, located near the area's eastern boundary, consist of glacial-scoured and glacial-trough bottom landforms.

The area is mostly underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. Smaller localized blocks of border zone gneiss, granite, and rhyolite occur. Weathered rock and soil from the quartz monzonite bedrock is highly erosive and unstable especially on the steep slopes.

Although the topography is rugged throughout the area, no unique or sharply defined features exist that would classify the area as being visually outstanding except that area adjacent to the Lochsa River. Here steep cliffs, rocky outcrops, and steep gradient streams, in conjunction with the River, create some very scenic views.

Elevations range from near 2,000 feet on the Lochsa River to 7,500 feet at Tom Beal Peak.

Except for a narrow band of western spruce-fir ecosystem along the main ridge and a lower section from Cliff-Cooperation Creek to the Tom Beal Road, most of the area is within the cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem. Existing vegetation patterns are mainly a result of large fires that burned in the early 1900's. The steep breaklands west of Warm Springs are characterized by large brush fields with scattered stringers of various sized trees. The higher elevation, mountain-upland and scoured glaciated landforms have scattered stands of lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine. Scattered meadows along stream courses also occur at the higher elevations.

The gentler stream-breaklands and mountain-upland landtypes located in and east of the Warm Springs Creek drainage contain stands of mature sawtimber of larch, white pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, ponderosa pine, and western redcedar. Because of the fire history, these stands of mature sawtimber are scattered in a mosaic of fully stocked stands of sapling/pole-sized trees of the same species.

Remnants of large, mature western redcedar stands are located on the alluvial flats south of the Lochsa River. These are also more prevalent along the river from Warm Springs Creek east to the area's eastern boundary.

Daubenmire habitat types represented include western redcedar/Lady Fern, western redcedar/pachistima, grand fir/pachistima, subalpine fir/ pachistima, subalpine fir/menzeisia, subalpine fir/beargrass, and subalpine fir/grouse whortleberry.

Because of its proximity to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, many people think of the area as "defacto wilderness." The area is, however, not used as wilderness, but merely as access to the Selway-Bitterroot. Big game hunters probably use the area the most by using the river corridor as their base. Some use is made also by day hikers in the vicinity of the bridges crossing the Lochsa River. Most use is passive, ie., scenic viewing of the River and the immediate foreground by motorists on the highway.

## II. CAPABILITY

### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

Because of its inaccessibility, the area has been lightly impacted by past human activity. Overall it appears undisturbed and natural.

The majority of trails were constructed in the early 1900's by the Forest Service to provide access for wildfire control. In addition to the three previously mentioned pack bridges, there is another such bridge in the Warm Springs Creek drainage.

Two fire lookouts are located at Bear Mountain and Jay Point. The Bear Mountain Lookout is still manned during the summer months. The Jay Point Lookout has been condemned and will likely be replaced.

A number of outfitter camps are located throughout the area but do not contain any permanent improvements, so evidence is minor.

#### B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS

The major side-drainages and higher elevation, mountain-upland landforms in the western portion provide visitors with relatively high solitude. Existing trails in this area follow main ridges. The side-drainages are screened from activities and noise coming from the U.S. Highway 12/Lochsa River corridor. The view looking out of these areas is towards the undeveloped North Lochsa Face Roadless Area located immediately north of U.S. Highway 12. The more exposed ridges and faces on the steeper breaklands in the western part of the area have lower solitude due to the lack of vegetation and views of U.S. Highway 12.

Located east of the Warm Springs Creek drainage, solitude is relatively high because of dense vegetation, gentler sloped stream bottoms, and larger proportion of mountain-upland and scoured glacial landforms.

Noise from heavy truck traffic on U.S. 12 is noticeable along the steep breaklands south of the Lochsa River in the western portion of the unit. Because of the narrow canyon, this noise can be heard up to 1 to 2 miles from the highway on exposed faces and ridges. This distance is significantly reduced in the side drainages. Those areas of stream breaklands located east of Warm Springs are not affected as greatly by highway noise as these steeper areas because of gentler topography and the denser timber cover.

Those areas previously discussed that have high solitude also provide a high degree of challenge for visitors wishing to be isolated from development and human activity. The majority of the side drainages, with the exception of Warm Springs Creek, currently receive extremely light use because of their isolation and difficult access. The mountain-upland landforms receive more use than these areas and provide better visitor dispersion because of more favorable vegetation, topography, and access.

The main dispersed recreation includes big-game hunting, camping, hiking, horseback riding, and fishing. Only two small unnamed lakes are located in the area.

Trails are the only permanent recreational facilities.

The area by itself does not give an impression of vastness, but in association with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, it does. The visitor does not usually separate the two areas as it appears as one very large roadless area.

#### C. SPECIAL FEATURES

Jerry Johnson Hot Springs is located in the Warm Springs Creek drainage about 1 1/2-miles from U.S. Highway 12. A pack bridge and wilderness provide access to the site. The hot springs receives the heaviest concentration of recreation of any individual dispersed recreational site on the Clearwater National Forest. This use is year-around.

The Middle Fork-Lochsa Recreation River corridor extends the full length of the roadless area ending at Powell Ranger Station. Nearly 9,960 acres of the corridor are within the area. The boundary line is indefinite. The direction for management is provided by a recreation river management plan.

Although no verified sightings or other confirmed evidence of the endangered gray wolf exists in the Lochsa Face roadless area, habitat conditions conducive to the wolf have resulted in designation of the area as essential habitat. The management of an adequate prey base (primarily elk) and restrictions on motorized road use are two major components for protection and enhancement of this endangered species.

#### D. EFFECT OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES

Because of its connection to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the size and especially the shape, even though narrow, does not affect potential wilderness attributes.

#### E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

The current boundaries would lend themselves to a logical and manageable wilderness. The boundary could be readjusted to exclude the timber stands in Cliff-Cooperation Creek east of Warm Spring Creek.

The original Lochsa Face RARE II Roadless Area consisted of 45,354 acres. It was contiguous to 27,673 acres in the Cliff-Cooperation area, which was known as the Elk Summit. This area was not included in RARE II because management was being considered in unit planning. Since that time, this area has been released from unit planning \* status and is now part of the larger roadless area.

### III. AVAILABILITY

#### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Recreation - Most potential developed recreational sites are located along the Lochsa River. Current availability exceeds the demand. Current and anticipated funding for developing sites is low. In most cases additional access would need to be provided across the river to construct additional sites.

2. Wildlife and Fish - Habitat exists for the following big game species: elk, moose, mule deer, white-tailed deer, mountain goats, mountain lions, and black bears. Elk are the most hunted big game animals. The area currently provides high quality, elk summer range. Elk winter range is concentrated at the lower elevations along the Lochsa River and its tributaries located west of Warm Springs Creek. There are about 8,327 acres of key big game winter range. Much of this is in need of rehabilitation through prescribed burning or tree removal to provide a continuing supply of forage. Since 1960, there have been some limited prescribed burning.

\* See explanation in Section IV.

A large moose population is located east of the Warm Springs Creek drainage in the Elk Summit area. This area has been identified as being of particular importance in the production and maintenance of this population.

The area contains 13 major creeks that drain into the southern face of the Lochsa River. The streams provide high quality water and rearing and spawning habitat for a large portion of the cutthroat and rainbow trout populations in the Lochsa River drainage. In addition, five of the creeks have been identified as containing steelhead and chinook salmon rearing and spawning habitat.

3. Livestock Operations - One grazing allotment for stock used by an outfitter is currently in use. It is located in the Indian and Gold Meadows Area and annually provides five animal-unit-months of grazing. The allotment does not contain any structural improvements such as fences. The greatest use is by domestic livestock for private recreation; most of this comes in the fall during hunting season.

4. Timber - The Lochsa Face has approximately 61,968 acres of land suitable for timber production. Standing volume is approximately 871 MMBF of sawtimber located throughout the area. The heaviest concentration is east of Mocus Creek. The Cliff-Cooperation area has the largest stands of reasonably accessible timber. Currently being analyzed is a capital investment project consisting of reconstructing about 2 miles of the existing Tom Beal Road and constructing nearly 13 miles of new road to access the Cliff, Jay, and Robin Creek drainages for timber harvest.

5. Minerals - Potential for valuable minerals is low. Known occurrences of placer gold exist along the Lochsa River; however, there are no known mining claims or operations. Although several small hot springs occur within the area, they are not extensive enough to provide geothermal power generation.

6. Cultural Resources - Current known cultural resource sites include seven USFS lookout locations, one hunting camp, six prehistoric sites, one cabin or cabin remains, and several Nez Perce Indian trails.

7. Land Use - Two outfitters provide big-game hunting services during the spring and fall, and guide school and pack trips during the summer. Seven camp locations have been assigned to them through the Forest Service Outfitter/Guide Special Use Permits. The campsites do not contain permanent improvements. Both outfitters also provide the same services in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

#### **B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

1) Fire - Although large fires occurred during the early 1900's, the current fire occurrence is low. Lightning strikes are the predominant forms of ignition.

### C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-24.

01311-Lochsa Face

| <u>Description</u>   |       |        | <u>Description</u>    |       |        |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|-------|--------|
| Gross Acres          | Acres | 73,027 | Gray Wolf Hab.        | Acres | 73,027 |
| Net Acres            | Acres | 73,027 | Peregrine Fal. Hab.   | Acres | 0      |
| Recreation           |       |        | Wildlife - Big Game   |       |        |
| Primitive            | RVD's | 0      | Big Game              |       |        |
| Semiprim Nonmotor.   | RVD's | 5,178  | Summer Habitat        | Acres | 0      |
| Semprim Motor.       | RVD's | 0      | Winter Habitat        | Acres | 0      |
| Roaded Natural       | RVD's | 16,978 | Elk                   |       |        |
| Range                |       |        | Summer Habitat-Key    | Acres | 18,392 |
| Existing Obligated   |       |        | Winter Habitat-Key    | Acres | 4,528  |
| Suitable             | Acres | 500    | Significant Fisheries |       |        |
| Allotments           | No.   | 1      | Stream Miles          | Miles | 184    |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 7      | Stream Habitat        | Acres | 683    |
| Existing Vacant      |       |        | Lakes                 | No.   | 0      |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0      | Lakes - Habitat       | Acres | 2      |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0      |                       |       |        |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0      | Water Developments    |       |        |
| Proposed             |       |        | Existing              | No.   | 0      |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0      | Minerals              |       |        |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0      | Potential Hardrock    |       |        |
| Timber               |       |        | Very High             | Acres | 0      |
| Tentative Suitable   | Acres | 34,295 | High                  | Acres | 0      |
| Standing Volume      | MMBF  | 871    | Moderate              | Acres | 0      |
| Corridors            |       |        | Low                   | Acres | 73,027 |
| Exist. and Potential | No.   | 0      | Claims                | No.   | 0      |
| Wildlife - T & E     |       |        | Potential Oil and Gas |       |        |
| Grizzly Bear         |       |        | Very High             | Acres | 0      |
| Habitat - Sit. 1     | Acres | 0      | High                  | Acres | 0      |
| Habitat - Sit. 2     | Acres | 0      | Moderate              | Acres | 0      |
| Habitat - Sit. 3     | Acres | 0      | Low                   | Acres | 73,027 |
| Bald Eagle Hab.      | Acres | 0      | Oil and Gas Leases    |       |        |
|                      |       |        | Leases                | No.   | 0      |
|                      |       |        | Leased Area           | Acres | 0      |

### IV. NEED

The primary contribution to the National Wilderness System would be to provide the opportunities for studying the ecological effects on the described habitat types by repeated wildfires in the early 1900's and the successional stages resulting from these fires.



Prior to 1963, a 44,000-acre portion located west of the Warm Springs Creek drainage was part of the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. In 1963, when the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness was designated, this portion was specifically excluded from the wilderness designation. It was designated a special planning area called the Lochsa Face Secretary's Area by the Secretary of Agriculture. Management goals established for this area are maintenance and enhancement of nonwilderness recreation and visual resource. Public interest in this portion was relatively high during the RARE II process with 65 percent of the respondents favoring nonwilderness status. It was recommended for nonwilderness status in the RARE II process.

The 29,000-acre portion located in and east of Warm Springs Creek is part of the Elk Summit Unit Plan Area. It was not considered during the RARE II process since the plan was in the final draft stage at that time. The Elk Summit Land Use Plan generated much public interest. Although there was and still continues to be interest in wilderness designation for the area east of Queen Creek, most of the wilderness interest is east of the Tom Beal Road in the remainder of the Elk Summit Planning Unit. Subsequently, in 1975 the Elk Summit Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Land Use Plan was appealed to the Chief of the Forest Service. The appeal was based on the assumption that the plan did not contain adequate data to make defensible designations regarding elk, moose, and fishery management. This appeal was upheld.

A supplement prepared in 1979 was also appealed and the chief's decision was to withdraw the unit plan and incorporate decisions about the unit within this Forest Plan.

Tables C-1 and C-2 show the location and proximity of the Lochsa Face Roadless Area to other wilderness and population centers in Idaho, western Montana, and eastern Washington.

Forty-seven comments were received on the Elk Summit area, between the Draft and the Final EIS. Although a number of the comments were rather general in nature as far as location, the Lochsa River drainage was mentioned frequently. Most concerns were with protection of water quality, anadromous fish streams and elk, and moose habitat.

Most, forty-two comments, recommended wilderness for large portions of the area, but again actual boundaries were not specified. Monitoring the scenic beauty of the Lochsa corridor was also a concern with some respondents.

One minor change was made between the Draft and Final for the Preferred Alternative K. The 7,600 acres of recommended wilderness adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness between Tom Beal Park and Bear Mountain was changed to a combination of protection and Management Area C8S. Much of the area was originally unsuitable for timber. This new designation will permit road access from Tom Beal Road to allow timber harvest at the mid and lower elevations in the area.

# V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

## A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

Table C-25

### Lochsa Face Roadless Area Management Emphasis by Alternative

| Management<br>Emphasis | Alternatives (thousand acres) |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                        | A                             | B    | C    | D    | E    | E1   | F    | G    | H    | I    | J    | K    |
| WILDERNESS             | 0                             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 7 6  | 7 6  | 0    | 23 9 | 73.0 | 73 0 | 7 6  | 0    |
| NONWILDERNESS          |                               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Unroaded               | 35 2                          | 0    | 30.8 | 32 8 | 22 5 | 22 5 | 41 5 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 22.5 | 22 5 |
| Elk Winter             | 3 6                           | 0    | 3 3  | 3 3  | 3 4  | 3 4  | 4 1  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3 3  | 3 4  |
| Timber/Wldlf-Wtshd     | 17.1                          | 40.2 | 23 6 | 10 0 | 0 7  | 0 7  | 1 0  | 25 5 | 0    | 0    | 7 6  | 0 7  |
| Timber/Visual-Rip      | 5 6                           | 3 8  | 2 4  | 7 1  | 5 9  | 5 9  | 1 9  | 9.4  | 0    | 0    | 5 5  | 2 0  |
| Timber/Special         | 0                             | 0    | 0    | 6 6  | 13 7 | 13 7 | 12 0 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 12 0 | 13 7 |
| Special                | 9 9                           | 9 9  | 9 9  | 9 9  | 9 9  | 9 9  | 9 9  | 9 9  | 0    | 0    | 9 9  | 9 9  |
| Protection             | 1 6                           | 19 1 | 3 0  | 3 3  | 6 6  | 6 6  | 2 6  | 4 3  | 0    | 0    | 1 9  | 20 8 |
| TOTAL                  | 73 0                          | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 | 73 0 |

#### Summary of Management Emphasis

|               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Wilderness    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 7 6  | 7 6  | 0    | 23 9 | 73.0 | 73 0 | 7 6  | 0    |
| Nonwilderness |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Developed     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Decade 1      | 9 6  | 9 6  | 7 6  | 7 6  | 7 6  | 7 6  | 7 6  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 7 6  | 9 3  |
| Decade 5      | 31 4 | 51 4 | 41 4 | 39 4 | 39 4 | 39 4 | 22 2 | 23 0 | 0    | 0    | 39 4 | 43 6 |
| Roadless      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Decade 1      | 63 4 | 63 4 | 65 4 | 65 4 | 57 8 | 57 8 | 65 4 | 49 1 | 0    | 0    | 57 8 | 63 7 |
| Decade 5      | 41 6 | 21 6 | 31 6 | 33 6 | 26 0 | 26 0 | 50 8 | 26 1 | 0    | 0    | 26 0 | 29 4 |

## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

Six of the twelve alternatives contain portions of the Lochsa Face Area designated to wilderness. The entire area is recommended for wilderness classification in Alternatives H and I. In Alternative G, 33,010 acres of the area from Warm Springs Creek to the Tom Beal Road is recommended for wilderness classification.

In Alternatives E, E1, and J, 10 percent is recommended for wilderness, including the portion of the Elk Summit Area from the boundary of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness northward encompassing the higher elevation lands in the vicinity.

The wilderness resource would be enhanced. The areas recommended for wilderness would most likely be proposed as additions to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Some improvement in boundary manageability would occur in Alternatives G, H, and I by moving the wilderness boundary to natural features which are better defined than the present wilderness boundary. The boundary would become less definable for the area added in Alternatives E, E1, and J.

Certain watersheds now partially outside wilderness would be included in their entirety in wilderness increasing the ability to manage entire stream ecosystems in a natural state. In Alternatives E, E1, and J, the areas recommended for addition to the wilderness systems are those having highest attraction for recreation (i.e., high visual appeal, high elevations, key big-game habitats) within Elk Summit.

Timber harvest would be precluded. The areas recommended for wilderness in Alternatives G, H, and J, include significant volumes of mature saw timber. About 871 MMBF of standing timber would not be available in Alternatives H and I. About 3 percent of the forest's tentatively suitable timberland would be unavailable for production under the same alternatives. The areas recommended as wilderness in Alternatives E, E1, and J include little land of high productivity and would have little effect on timber productivity.

Little effect on mineral or grazing would be expected since these resources are minimal in the areas involved. Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect either at the time of designation or as stated in designation legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry. If minerals were discovered, development costs would be extremely high because of operating plan restrictions needed to protect the wilderness values.

Effects of wilderness management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural visual setting would remain.
- The primitive and semiprimitive settings would be retained. Opportunity for primitive nonmotorized recreation activities would be retained while opportunity for motorized and developed recreation would be limited.

- The areas recommended are considered to be essential habitat for gray wolf. Inclusion of key big game winter range found in these areas could have some detrimental effect on gray wolf habitat by reducing big game winter range over the long-term.

There are 4,528 acres of key winter range in the area. In Alternative H and I, all acres would be affected. In Alternatives E, E1, and J no winter range would be affected. In Alternative G, minimal acreage would be affected. The effect on essential gray wolf security habitat would be positive, because wilderness classification generally minimizes the adverse effects caused by man.

- Effects on big game would be similar to those described above for gray wolf. Management of winter range would be constrained to exclude prescribed fire or mechanical treatments with a resultant loss of quality habitat over the long-term.

- Water quality would remain high within and issuing from areas classified as wilderness.

- Mechanical or other improvement of anadromous fishery could not occur under existing wilderness policy.

Social and economic effects relate to wilderness, timber, and recreation. Short-term social effects of wilderness classification would be minimal. Use of the area would continue in present patterns. Wilderness advocates would be supported. In the long-term wilderness classification would remove timber from the Forest base and thus reduce raw material available to the local wood products industry. Outfitter/guide businesses would be unaffected in these areas. Those people who prefer activities in a more roaded natural setting would not be supported.

## **2. Designation: Nonwilderness** **Management Emphasis: Unroaded**

Eight of the twelve alternatives designate portions of the Lochsa Face Area to unroaded management. In Alternative F, about 57 percent of the area from its western boundary to Warm Springs Creek and including Tom Beal Peak is designated. Alternative A (current direction) includes 48 percent located west of Bear Mountain with Alternatives C and D designating nearly 5,000 acres in the Tom Beal Peak area. In Alternatives E, E1, F, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) about 31 to 35 percent located west of Flytrap Butte is designated.

These areas would be retained in an unroaded condition. Wilderness attributes would remain essentially unchanged. The configuration and location of the areas adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness would make future consideration for wilderness a realistic possibility. The designations would have no detrimental effect on existing wilderness and would serve as a buffer by allowing management and use similar to wilderness but not as severely constrained.

Timber volumes within the affected areas would be removed from the timber base and would not be available for regulated harvest. The standing volume of mature timber is small, but in the long-term, a small reduction in sustained yield of the Forest would result.

Mineral exploration and development would be allowed, although recreation would be emphasized. Costs of such activities would be extremely high because of access constraints. Removal of common varieties of mineral such as sand, gravel, and quarried rock would not be permitted.

The areas have no significant grazing lands.

Effects of unroaded management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The scenery would be retained in its natural condition.
- The semiprimitive setting would be maintained which would attract recreationist who prefer primitive activities. Opportunity for motorized activities and developed facilities would be minimal.
- Essential gray wolf security and habitat would remain essentially unchanged.
- Virtually all key big game winter habitat would be excluded from these designations. The effect on key summer habitat is positive because human disturbance would remain minimal.
- Water quality would remain high.
- Anadromous fish habitat would be allowed.

Social and economic effects relate to recreation, timber and wilderness. The designations would have little effect on existing patterns of use. In the long-term, the removal of commercial forest land from regulated harvest would reduce the raw material available to industry. Outfitter/guide businesses would be unaffected. People supporting wilderness management concepts would be largely supported. Those individuals favoring roaded natural recreation would not be supported.

### 3. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Elk Winter Range

These areas would provide big game winter forage and thermal cover. Lands designated elk winter range would be classified as unsuitable for timber production. Timber harvest could occur only on an opportunity basis to maintain big-game forage. Roads needed to manage adjacent areas with different designations could be constructed through such areas only if they met soil and watershed constraints.

Seven of the twelve alternatives designate portions of the Lochsa Face to this emphasis. In Alternative F, about 6 percent which contains 90 percent of the key winter range is designated. Alternative A (current direction) designates 5 percent which contains 79 percent of the available key winter range. In

Alternatives C, D, E, E1, J, and K (Preferred Alternative), about 5 percent representing 72 percent of the available range is designated to winter range management.

Potential for future designation to wilderness would be lost primarily because natural successional forces would be interrupted by prescribed fire and potential mechanical treatments. Also, roads crossing the area would preclude wilderness consideration. The acreage involved is few and sparsely scattered.

Although there is little standing timber volumes, it would be unavailable for regulated harvest. Growth potential would remain unchanged, and trees could be harvested to meet other resource objectives.

Mineral exploration and development would be allowed. Some regulation might be needed but would not be expected to limit production significantly. Accessibility would be the controlling cost factor in mineral development.

The areas have no significant grazing land.

Effects of elk winter range management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Only temporary visual disruptions would occur.
- The recreational attractions would remain essentially unchanged in these areas. The improvement of big-game habitat would positively affect hunting and sight seeing in surrounding lands by increasing big game populations.
- Motorized recreation would be limited.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat values would be impacted by roads. Road closures could mitigate such impacts.
- Emphasis is placed on optimizing the areas for elk winter habitat. This would positively affect big game populations.
- Management under this emphasis would have little effect on water quality or anadromous fish and would not constrain management of these resources.

Social and economic effects relate to timber, wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. A minor volume of timber would not be harvested. Such management would positively affect outfitting/guide businesses. Wilderness advocates would not be supported.

4. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife-Watershed

The lands designated under this management emphasis would be managed for timber production at varying investment levels. Minimum constraints relating to elk security needs and water quality would be met.

Ten of the twelve alternatives designate portions of the Lochsa Face for future timber production. Alternative B designates 55 percent; Alternative G designates about 35 percent located west of Warm Springs Creek; Alternative C designates about 2 to 3 percent including productive areas from Flytrap Butte to Tom Beal Road. In Alternative A (current direction) nearly 23 percent including the most productive timberland located from the Warm Springs drainage east to the Tom Beal Road is designated to timber management. Alternatives E, E1, F and K (Preferred Alternative) contain less than 1 percent.

In all ten alternatives, approximately 87 percent of the area would retain its roadless character through the end of the first decade. In Alternatives F and G, approximately 70 percent of the area would remain unroaded through the end of the fifth decade. In Alternative A (current direction), nearly 60 percent of the area would remain unroaded by the fifth decade, with about 40 percent of the area remaining unroaded in Alternatives C, D, E, E1, J, and K (Preferred Alternative). In Alternative B, only 30 percent of the area would retain its unroaded character after the fifth decade.

Road construction and timber harvesting would destroy the potential for future designation to wilderness. Activities would occur adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and affect wilderness attributes.

Roads would improve potential for mineral exploration and development. Some improvement in grazing potential would occur with creation of transitory range. These effects would be most significant in Alternatives A (current direction), B, C, and D which designate the eastern portions of the area. Effects would be less and more costly to attain in Alternatives E, E1, F, G, and J, which designate the more rugged western portions of the area.

Effects of timber wildlife/watershed management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The visual character of the affected areas would be substantially altered by timber harvest and roads. Visual changes would be evident from U.S. Highway 12.
- Recreational attractions would generally be reduced. The setting would change from semiprimitive/primitive to roaded natural with high intensity of activity conflicting with semiprimitive recreation. Opportunities for motorized activities would be created as roads are constructed.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat would be reduced because of roading.
- In Alternatives D, E, E1, F, J, and K (Preferred Alternative), key elk winter range could be improved to benefit elk. Key elk summer range areas would suffer loss in quality habitat. A minimum of 25 percent elk habitat potential would be maintained.
- Water quality and anadromous fish habitat would decrease. Existing statutory standards would be met. Effects would occur in the Lochsa River and its tributaries.

Social and economic effects relate to timber, recreation, wildlife, and wilderness. The timber industry would be supported. The amount of contribution varies with acreage designated. Alternative B contributes most with 40,230 acres and Alternative F the least with 1,014 acres. Contributions to the Federal Treasury increase and would vary depending on land base involved and profitability of managing market values (the western portions of the area being least profitable).

Social effects upon users of nonpriced resources would relate primarily to the changes in recreational setting from roadless to developed. Wilderness advocates would not be supported. Consumptive and aesthetic users of the big game resource would be partially supported. Outfitter/guides businesses would be adversely affected.

5. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Visual-Riparian

All alternatives with the exception of H and I contain areas that have a goal of timber production within areas that fall into retention/partial retention visual quality objectives (VQO's) and that have ecologically important riparian vegetation and features located along stream courses.

In Alternative G, approximately 13 percent of the Lochsa Face is designated. Alternatives A (current direction), D, E, E1, and J designate 7 to 10 percent; Alternatives B, C, F, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate 3 to 5 percent.

Although the affected areas are too small to qualify for wilderness classification, activities would preclude the area from future wilderness designation.

Timber would be harvested on an extended rotation basis.

Improved access would lower costs of mineral exploration and development.

Effects of timber/visual-riparian management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Visual impacts would mirror those of surrounding management areas.
- The existing primitive/semiprimitive recreational setting would be changed to a roaded natural setting. The attractions of riparian or trail side corridors would generally be maintained but would be strongly influenced by conflicting activities occurring outside the area.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat would be affected by management on surrounding land. In most instances, the effects would be disturbance and loss of habitat quality. Impacts would be evaluated by utilizing the formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with proposed projects.
- Big game habitat would reflect effects of management on adjacent lands and would generally be a loss of habitat quality for big game.



The areas in themselves are too small to significantly affect social or economic conditions. Management constraints applied would increase the cost of producing market values such as timber thus reducing the return to the Federal Treasury. Overall the effects would be similar to those occurring on adjacent lands.

**6. Designation: Nonwilderness**  
**Management Emphasis: Timber/Special**

In Alternatives E, E1, and K (Preferred Alternative) about 26 percent located on the river breaklands east of Mocus Creek would be managed with a primary goal of maintaining big-game summer range with a secondary goal of timber production. In Alternatives F and J about 16 percent located in the Cooperation, Eagle, Robin, Jay and Cliff Creek drainages is designated. Nearly 65 percent of the key big-game summer range is located in these 5 drainages. Alternative D contains about 10 percent located in the Robin, Jay and Cliff Creek drainages (39 percent of the area's key big-game summer range).

Activities would preclude this area being considered for wilderness. In Alternatives E, E1, J, and K (Preferred Alternative), activities could occur adjacent to existing or recommended wilderness and could adversely affect wilderness qualities.

Mineral exploration and development would benefit by increased access.

Merchantable timber could be harvested but costs would be higher for management and development than under timber emphasis. Forage for grazing domestic animals would be unavailable under this emphasis.

Effects of timber/special management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The visual character would be spatially altered, but retention/partial retention would be maintained in sensitive areas.
- Recreational activities would change from semiprimitive/primitive to roaded natural. The existing attractions for recreation would generally be maintained or enhanced, particularly relating to big-game hunting and viewing.
- Essential gray wolf habitat would be adversely affected by increased disturbance during road building and timber harvest. Road closures would mitigate post harvest impacts.
- Key summer elk and moose habitats would be managed to maximize habitat quality for these species.
- Water quality and anadromous fish habitat would remain essentially unchanged.

Social and economic effects center on timber, recreation, and wilderness. Marketable timber resources would be available to the extent possible under resource emphasis. No loss in future yield of wood products is predicted, but added constraints on timber management practices would decrease revenues to the Treasury. One outfitter/guide business would be affected adversely by the roads. Those individuals favoring roaded natural activities would be supported. Those individuals favoring wilderness would not be supported.

7. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Special

Approximately 9,900 acres of the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor is located within 9 percent of the Lochsa Face Roadless Area. Corridor management objectives are to protect and enhance the unique recreational, wildlife, and fisheries values of the river ecosystem.

In Alternatives A (current direction), B, C, D, E, E1, G, J, and K (Preferred Alternative), the entire river corridor is designated under this emphasis. In Alternatives H and I, this portion of the corridor would be managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and many of the river resource values.

For the most part, the areas would retain wilderness attributes if adjacent land areas would also retain wilderness attributes. This would be the case for portions of the area under all alternatives except B. Activities not compatible with wilderness would be permitted. In Alternatives H and I, wilderness characteristics would be preserved as wilderness policies would be in force.

Timber resources would be unavailable except under unusual circumstances. Regulated harvest would not occur. Mineral exploration and development could occur. However, development costs would be high to protect river values. These areas have insignificant grazing potential but what exists would be unavailable for commercial use.

Effects of special management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural landscape would remain.
- Recreational settings and attractions would be unaffected.
- Gray wolf habitat would remain unchanged, but overall suitability would be dependant upon activities in adjacent lands.
- Key big-game summer habitat could continue to be managed to maintain quality habitat. Under wilderness alternatives, prescribed fire or mechanical treatments would not be allowed.
- Water quality and anadromous fish habitat would not be affected by this management emphasis.

Social and economic impacts relate to timber, recreation, and wilderness. Classification of productive forest lands as unsuitable would not significantly affect local industry. Social values and conditions relating to the river would remain unchanged. Individuals favoring wilderness would be completely supported in Alternatives H and I, while only being partially served in other alternatives.

8. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Protection

Lands in this category are unavailable for timber or other resource investment purposes because of biophysical conditions. Acre variances between alternatives are created by other resource constraints. Management would be custodial with no investments occurring.

Areas designated to protection emphasis are located predominantly at high elevations adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Application of the protection emphasis in these areas is expected to have little or no effect on other resources.

These areas are small and scattered throughout management areas. In some cases their size may be large enough to meet the minimum acreage criterion established for roadless area. Roads or trails could be constructed across such areas to access surrounding areas which allow timber harvesting and/or recreation. However, no direct investment activities would occur.

Mineral exploration and development could occur, but the costs of these activities would be higher due to limited access.

Ten of the twelve alternatives contain such land. In Alternatives B and K (Preferred Alternative), 26 to 29 percent of the Lochsa Face Area is designated to this emphasis. Approximately 5 to 9 percent is designated in Alternatives C, D, E, E1, F, and G with only 2 to 3 percent in Alternatives A and J.

Effects on resources would reflect those resulting from management of surrounding lands. However, if roads were constructed, essential gray wolf security values would be impacted. Although road closures would mitigate such impacts.

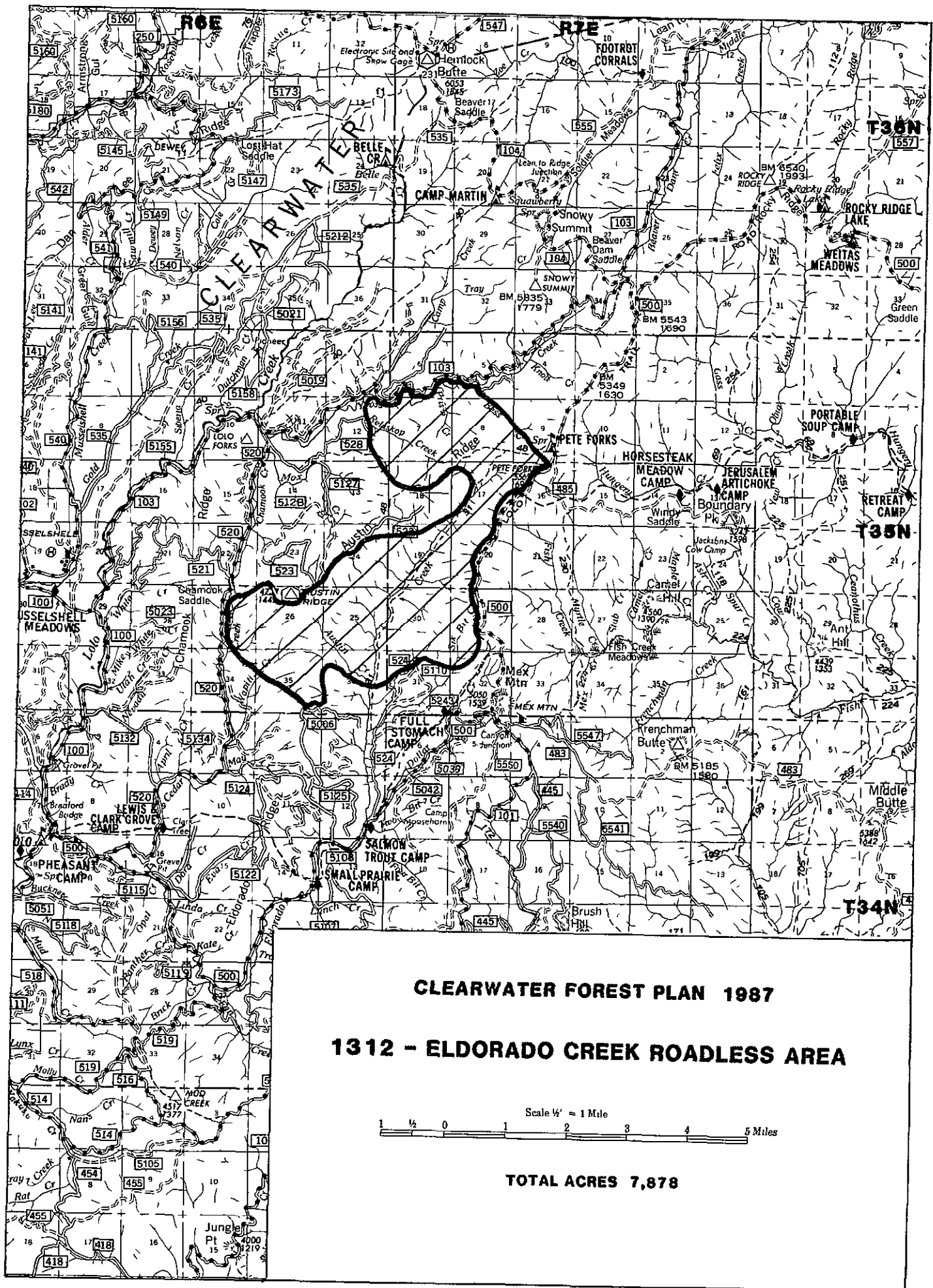
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**ELDORADO CREEK ROADLESS AREA**



## ELDORADO CREEK ROADLESS AREA (01312)

| Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|-------------|-----------|
| 7,878       | 7,878     |

### I. DESCRIPTION

The Eldorado Creek Roadless Area is centered in the headwaters of the Eldorado Creek drainage approximately 50 miles from Orofino, Idaho. The area is accessible by numerous, mostly graveled Forest roads. The interior is accessed by about eight miles of low-standard trails. The area is about 5 miles long and one-half to two miles wide.

Rolling uplands are mainly within Eldorado Creek, but also encompasses the heads of six other lesser streams. The area is totally underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Idaho batholith. The Miocene Columbia River basalt occurs as a cap over the quartz monzonite producing a stable landscape.

Vegetatively, Eldorado is in a cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem. This ecosystem has a dense stand of trees consisting mainly of western redcedar, western white pine, grand fir, Douglas-fir, Englemann spruce, and lesser amounts of subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, larch, ponderosa pine, and mountain hemlock.

With relatively dense stands of large timber and rolling land, the visitor can see only short distances. There are virtually no viewing points.

Big game hunters and huckleberry pickers are the most prominent users.

Surrounding areas are intensively managed for timber except for a roadless strip of land in Fish Creek (North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area) adjacent to the Lolo Motorway which forms the east boundary.

### II. CAPABILITY

#### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

Even though the area is small, the natural appearance has not been altered. The integrity may be somewhat compromised because of the small size. The trail system within the area is not apparent unless one is on a trail.

#### B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS

Solitude is virtually nonexistent because of adjacent timber harvesting activities and other motorized traffic. Because of this lack of solitude and other characteristic values associated with wilderness, experiences are also very limited.

### C. SPECIAL FEATURES

The Lolo Trail/Lewis and Clark Trail traverses the area along the east side parallel to the Lolo Motorway.

### D. EFFECT OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES

The small size and irregular narrow shape of the Eldorado Creek Roadless Area effectively negates any wilderness attributes.

### E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

The only identifiable boundary is the Lolo Motorway. There is virtually no logical way the rest of the boundaries could be adjusted to end up with a manageable wilderness.

## III. AVAILABILITY

### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Wildlife - The area contains habitat for elk, mule deer, white-tail deer, moose, and black bears. It provides the summer range for elk which winter in the adjacent Pete King drainage. There is no winter range.
2. Timber - All 7,878 acres of the Eldorado are highly suitable for timber production. The area contains a standing sawtimber volume of about 130 MMBF of timber.
3. Minerals - Placer gold and thorium occur. Mining claims for both minerals exist on Eldorado Creek. Most of this area is rated high for placer gold and thorium.
4. Cultural Resources - The inventoried cultural resource lists two lookout sites, two cabins or cabin remains, one mining site, and two prehistoric hunting areas. Three Nez Perce Indian trails existed in this area as well.

### B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No important management considerations pertain to this roadless area.



### C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-26.

01312-Eldorado

| <u>Description</u>   |       |       | <u>Description</u>    |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Gross Acres          | Acres | 7,878 | Gray Wolf Hab.        | Acres | 0     |
| Net Acres            | Acres | 7,878 | Peregrine Fal. Hab.   | Acres | 0     |
| Recreation           |       |       | Wildlife - Big Game   |       |       |
| Primitive            | RVD's | 0     | Big Game              |       |       |
| Semiprim Nonmotor.   | RVD's | 180   | Summer Habitat        | Acres | 0     |
| Semiprim Motor.      | RVD's | 0     | Winter Habitat        | Acres | 0     |
| Roaded Natural       | RVD's | 3,797 | Elk                   |       |       |
| Range                |       |       | Summer Habitat-Key    | Acres | 3,439 |
| Existing Obligated   |       |       | Winter Habitat-Key    | Acres | 0     |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Significant Fisheries |       |       |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0     | Stream Miles          | Miles | 31    |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Stream Habitat        | Acres | 9     |
| Existing Vacant      |       |       | Lakes                 | No.   | 0     |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Lakes - Habitat       | Acres | 0     |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0     | Water Developments    |       |       |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Existing              | No.   | 0     |
| Proposed             |       |       | Minerals              |       |       |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Potential Hardrock    |       |       |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Very High             | Acres | 0     |
| Timber               |       |       | High                  | Acres | 6,158 |
| Tentative Suitable   | Acres | 7,878 | Moderate              | Acres | 0     |
| Standing Volume      | MMBF  | 130   | Low                   | Acres | 1,720 |
| Corridors            |       |       | Claims                | No.   | 10    |
| Exist. and Potential | No.   | 0     | Potential Oil and Gas |       |       |
| Wildlife - T & E     |       |       | Very High             | Acres | 0     |
| Grizzly Bear         |       |       | High                  | Acres | 0     |
| Habitat - Sit. 1     | Acres | 0     | Moderate              | Acres | 0     |
| Habitat - Sit. 2     | Acres | 0     | Low                   | Acres | 7,878 |
| Habitat - Sit. 3     | Acres | 0     | Oil and Gas Leases    |       |       |
| Bald Eagle Hab.      | Acres | 0     | Leases                | No.   | 0     |
|                      |       |       | Leased Area           | Acres | 0     |

### IV. NEED

The area offers no significant contributions to the wilderness system. There has not been any public interest in establishing the area as wilderness.

Tables C-1 and C-2 shows the location and proximity of the Eldorado Creek Roadless Area to other wilderness and population centers in Idaho, western Montana, and eastern Washington.

Only one comment was received on the area between the Draft and the Final EIS. This respondent advocated leaving the area roadless, but gave no particular reason for doing so. The designation of E1 (timber/wildlife/watershed) does not change between the Draft and the Final for the Preferred Alternative K.

The management emphasis on the following page shows the acres proposed to various resource management in each alternative.

# V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

## A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

Table C-27

### Eldorado Roadless Area Management Emphasis by Alternative

| Management Emphasis            | Alternatives (thousand acres) |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                | A                             | B   | C   | D   | E   | E1  | F   | G   | H   | I   | J   | K   |
| WILDERNESS                     | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 7 9 | 0   | 0   |
| NONWILDERNESS                  |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Unroaded                       | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Elk Winter                     | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Timber/Wildlf-Wtshd            | 6 1                           | 6 6 | 6 6 | 5 2 | 4 0 | 4 0 | 3 7 | 6 2 | 3 7 | 0   | 5 5 | 7 1 |
| Timber/Visual-Rip              | 1 2                           | 0 7 | 0 7 | 1 9 | 3 0 | 3 0 | 3 8 | 1 1 | 4 2 | 0   | 2 0 | 0 8 |
| Timber/Special                 | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Special                        | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Protection                     | 0 6                           | 0 6 | 0 6 | 0 8 | 0 9 | 0 9 | 0 4 | 0 6 | 0   | 0   | 0 4 | 0   |
| TOTAL                          | 7 9                           | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 |
| Summary of Management Emphasis |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Wilderness                     | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 7 9 | 0   | 0   |
| Nonwilderness                  |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Developed                      |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Decade 1                       | 7 9                           | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 0   | 7 9 | 1 7 |
| Decade 5                       | 7 9                           | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 7 9 | 0   | 7 9 | 7 9 |
| Roadless                       |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Decade 1                       | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 6 2 |
| Decade 5                       | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

The entire 7,878 acre area is designated to wilderness in Alternative I.

This emphasis would result in a marginal wilderness due to the area's small size. Opportunities for solitude would exist during the times that noise from the surrounding areas could not be heard.

The 130 MMBF standing timber volume would not be available under this management. About 0.6 percent of the Forest's tentatively suitable timberland would be unavailable.

Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect when designated wilderness or as stated in legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Extraction would be difficult because of access and other operational requirements needed to protect the wilderness.

Effects of wilderness management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural appearing landscape as viewed from the foreground/middleground viewing areas of the Lewis and Clark Trail would be maintained.
- Big game hunting, hiking, and stream fishing would continue to be the dominant recreation.
- Elk security cover would be maintained, but big game browse would decrease unless natural fires were allowed to burn. Old-growth timber and old-growth dependent wildlife species would be maintained.
- Water quality and fisheries would be unchanged.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. Since wilderness precludes timber harvest and could preclude mineral development, the related industries would not be supported. Individuals valuing wilderness would be supported, but those who use roads for recreating would not be.

### 2. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife-Watershed

The lands designated under this management emphasis would be managed for timber production at varying investment levels. Minimum constraints relating to protection of big-game habitat and water quality would be met.

Areas under this management range from 84 to 90 percent of the Eldorado Area in Alternatives A (current direction), B, C, G, and K (Preferred Alternative). Alternatives D and J designate 70 percent; Alternatives E, E1, F, and H designate about 50 percent.

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This management emphasis would significantly reduce the area's wilderness characteristics and preclude future wilderness designation by the end of the first decade. Any discovered minerals, oil, and gas would be more available and less costly to extract because of improved access.

Effects of timber/wildlife-watershed management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Visual quality would be affected by road access and timber harvest. The natural landscape in visually sensitive portions would be retained or partially retained. The VQO of retention in the foreground area of the Lewis and Clark Trail would be maintained.

- The semiprimitive recreational setting would be changed to roaded natural for the entire area. Big game hunting, hiking, and fishing would still occur. The recreational activity of gathering Forest products would increase.

- Elk and moose security would be impacted by timber harvest and road access. This could be partially mitigated by road closures. A guideline of 25 percent of potential elk use has been established. Big-game summer range habitat would be managed for 25 percent of elk potential in conjunction with timber management.

- Vegetative successional stages would tend toward seral stages with fewer age classes than now present.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife/fish, recreation, and wilderness. Timber and mineral resources would be available supporting the timber and minerals industries. The change in landscape could be disruptive to those individuals using the area for primitive or semiprimitive recreation. Those individuals favoring roaded natural activities would be supported. Wilderness advocates would not be served.

### 3. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Timber/Visual-Riparian

This management emphasis has a goal of timber production on visually sensitive areas such as the Lewis and Clark Trail that fall into the retention/partial retention categories and that have areas of ecologically important riparian vegetation and features along stream courses.

In Alternatives F and H nearly 50 percent of the area would be managed under this emphasis. In Alternatives A (current direction), D, G, and J, 15 to 25 percent is designated. Only 10 percent is designated in Alternatives B, C, and K (Preferred Alternative).

This emphasis would preclude future wilderness designation.

An estimated 1,000 to 2,000 acres of tentatively suitable timberland would be available for limited harvest on an extended rotation basis in Alternatives A (current direction), D, E, E1, G, and J. About 700 acres would be available in Alternatives B and C.

Minerals exploration and development would be allowed, but the cost of such activities would be higher to protect visual/riparian values.

Effects of timber/visual-riparian management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Visual quality would be affected by road access and timber harvest. The area in the immediate foreground of the Lewis and Clark Trail and Lolo Motorway would meet Retention visual management objectives. Timber cutting in the middle and background viewing areas would be modified to appear as natural openings.
- The semiprimitive setting would change to roaded natural. Big game hunting, hiking, and fishing would continue. Gathering of Forest products would increase.
- Cutting would be modified in riparian areas to protect water quality and fisheries habitat.
- Because of the extended timber rotation, more age classes would be represented than in adjacent higher investment timber areas. More old-growth values would be favored.
- Elk security area would be impacted by timber harvest and road access. This would be partially mitigated by road closures to maintain a minimum 25 percent potential elk use.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, recreation and wilderness. Timber resources would be available but at a reduced yield to protect the riparian areas and Lewis and Clark Trail. Mineral resources would still be available. Considerations for the riparian areas and historical trails would be reflected in operating plans. This could mean a greater operating cost to miners. The change in landscape could be disruptive to those individuals using the area for primitive or semiprimitive recreation. Those individuals favoring roaded natural recreation would be supported. Those individuals supporting wilderness would not be served.

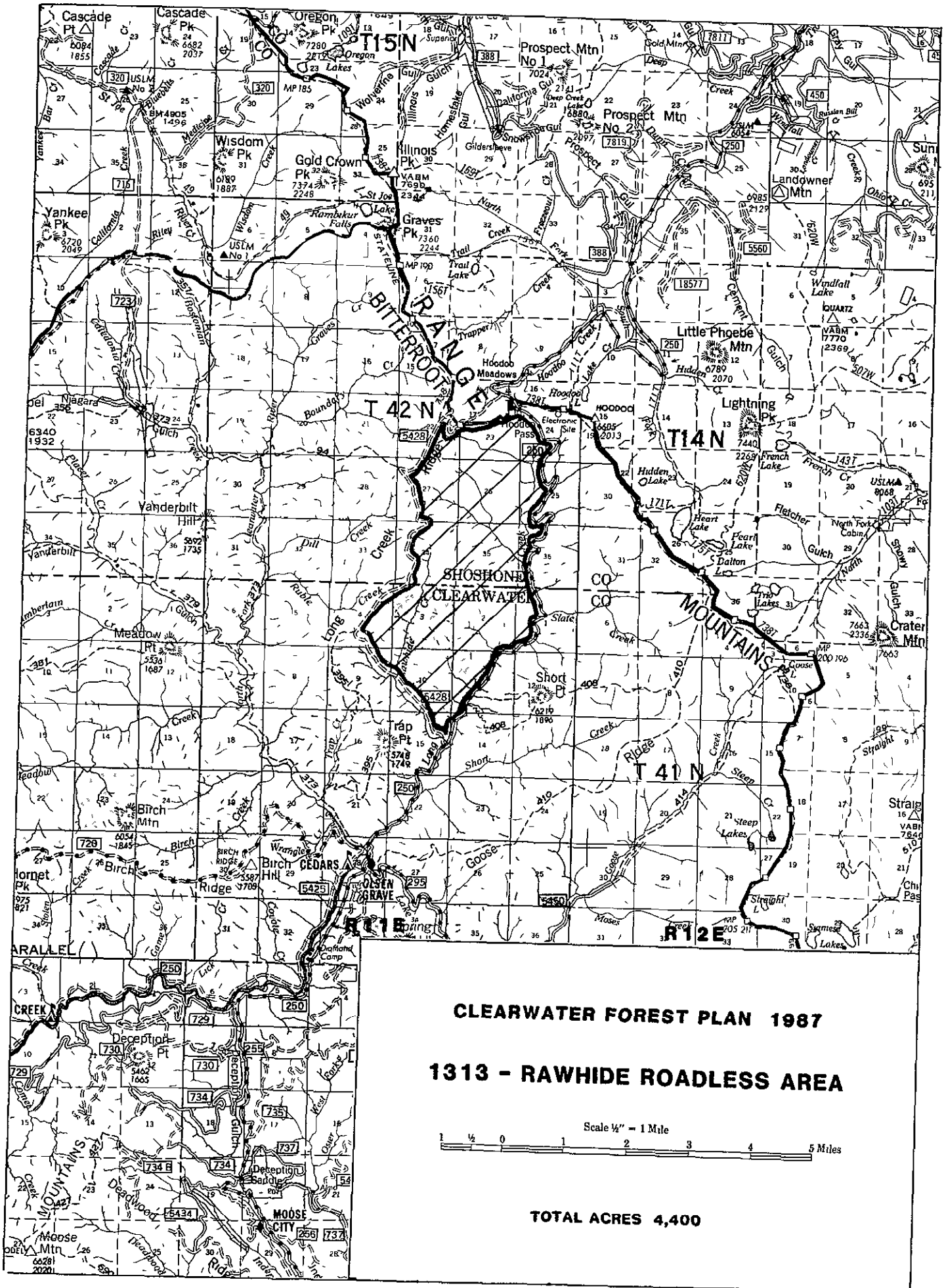
#### 4. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Protection

Lands in this category are unavailable for timber or other resource investment because of biophysical conditions. Management would be minimal with no direct investments occurring.

Generally, these areas are small and scattered throughout surrounding management areas. Roads or trails could be constructed across such areas to access surrounding areas which allow timber harvesting and/or recreation.

Approximately 21 percent of the area is designated to protection management in Alternative K (Preferred Alternative). From 4 to 11 percent is designated to protection management under all other alternatives except Alternative I. In this particular roadless area, the protection management areas would be impacted by road access and the effects would mirror those discussed in timber/wildlife-watershed management section.

RAWHIDE ROADLESS AREA





## RAWHIDE ROADLESS AREA (01313)

| Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|-------------|-----------|
| 5,300       | 4,400     |

### I. DESCRIPTION

The Rawhide Roadless Area is situated in the Rawhide and Long Creek drainages of the Upper North Fork Clearwater River within Clearwater and Shoshone Counties. The area is bounded by and accessed from the Pierce-Superior road #250. It is approximately 22 miles from Superior, Montana, and 100 miles from Orofino, Idaho, via the Pierce-Superior road.

The west boundary is the original Rawhide Road which provided the early access over Hoodoo Pass from Montana into Idaho. This road was eventually replaced by the graveled Pierce-Superior road in the early 1950's. The original road is usable as a trail. There are no other trails in the interior.

Rawhide is a small, compact, one and one-half mile wide roadless area comprised of steep glacial lands near the state line to narrow flat creek bottoms in the Rawhide and Long Creek drainages. Elevations range from 6,000 feet at Hoodoo Pass to 4,200 feet at the mouth of Rawhide Creek. The area is underlain by fairly stable Belt rocks of the Wallace formation. The major lithologies are limestones, quartzites, dolomites, and argillites.

Although much land was burned in the early 1900's, the land suitable for trees has regenerated. Vegetation varies from the higher elevation, mountain meadows and low shrubs typical of an alpine-barren ecosystem to lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and Douglas-fir representing the lower elevation western spruce-fir ecosystem.

Current major use is by big-game hunters in the fall.

### II. CAPABILITY

#### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

A one-half mile section of logging road extends into the area from the original Rawhide Road, accessing a section of private land which is scheduled for a near future timber harvest. The remainder has no visible evidence of activity or disturbance.

#### B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS

External influences of sight and sound negate any opportunities for solitude. The Pierce-Superior road can be viewed from most places, and the sounds of traffic can be heard throughout the area.

Cross-country foot travel and hunting are the two major and possibly only real dispersed recreation available.

### C. SPECIAL FEATURES

Although no verified sightings or other confirmed evidence of the endangered gray wolf exists in the Rawhide Roadless Area, habitat conditions conducive to the wolf have resulted in designation of the area as essential habitat. The management of an adequate prey base (primarily elk) and restrictions on motorized road use are two major components for protection and enhancement of this endangered species.

### D. EFFECT OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES

The small size and narrow shape effectively detracts from most wilderness attributes. However, the Rawhide Road, which is now nothing much more than a trail, separates this area from the 40,700 acre Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork roadless area, so in effect the two could actually be considered as one large roadless area.

### E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

The east boundary which is the Pierce-Superior road #250 is a logical boundary. Even if the area were larger, the 900 acres of private land in the south end would be in conflict in considering wilderness for the area.

Because of the deteriorating Rawhide Road along the west side, it would be logical to include this area in conjunction with the Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork area if wilderness designation was being considered.

## III. AVAILABILITY

### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Wildlife - Elk, deer, and black bears are the major big game species present. Because of the elevations there is no big game winter range.
2. Timber - The Rawhide Area has 3,300 acres of land suitable for timber production with an estimated standing volume of 36 MMBF of sawtimber. The area contains a sizeable amount of lodgepole pine especially at the higher elevations.
3. Minerals - Except for a small section of land in lower Rawhide Creek which has a moderate mineral potential for gold and silver, the majority of the area has a low potential for minerals. The potential for oil and gas is also low. There is currently a pending oil and gas lease application.

### B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No important management considerations pertain to this roadless area.

### C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-28.

01313-Rawhide

| <u>Description</u>   |       |       | <u>Description</u>    |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Gross Acres          | Acres | 5,300 | Gray Wolf Hab.        | Acres | 4,400 |
| Net Acres            | Acres | 4,400 | Peregrine Fal. Hab.   | Acres | 0     |
| Recreation           |       |       | Wildlife - Big Game   |       |       |
| Primitive            | RVD's | 7     | Big Game              |       |       |
| Semiprim Nonmotor.   | RVD's | 9     | Summer Habitat        | Acres | 0     |
| Semiprim Motor.      | RVD's | 0     | Winter Habitat        | Acres | 0     |
| Roaded Natural       | RVD's | 3,489 | Elk                   |       |       |
| Range                |       |       | Summer Habitat-Key    | Acres | 0     |
| Existing Obligated   |       |       | Winter Habitat-Key    | Acres | 0     |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Significant Fisheries |       |       |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0     | Stream Miles          | Miles | 21    |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Stream Habitat        | Acres | 25    |
| Existing Vacant      |       |       | Lakes                 | No.   | 0     |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Lakes - Habitat       | Acres | 0     |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0     | Water Developments    |       |       |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Existing              | No.   | 0     |
| Proposed             |       |       | Minerals              |       |       |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0     | Potential Hardrock    |       |       |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0     | Very High             | Acres | 0     |
| Timber               |       |       | High                  | Acres | 0     |
| Tentative Suitable   | Acres | 3,300 | Moderate              | Acres | 640   |
| Standing Volume      | MMBF  | 36    | Low                   | Acres | 3,760 |
| Corridors            |       |       | Claims                | No.   | 0     |
| Exist. and Potential | No.   | 0     | Potential Oil and Gas |       |       |
| Wildlife - T & E     |       |       | Very High             | Acres | 0     |
| Grizzly Bear         |       |       | High                  | Acres | 0     |
| Habitat - Sit. 1     | Acres | 0     | Moderate              | Acres | 0     |
| Habitat - Sit. 2     | Acres | 0     | Low                   | Acres | 4,400 |
| Habitat - Sit. 3     | Acres | 0     | Oil and Gas Leases    |       |       |
| Bald Eagle Hab.      | Acres | 0     | Leases                | No.   | 0     |
|                      |       |       | Leased Area           | Acres | 0     |

### IV. NEED

Other than representing two major ecosystems, western spruce-fir and alpine meadows and barren, the Rawhide Roadless Area, because of its size, is not a significant contribution to the wilderness system.

Very little wilderness interest in the Rawhide area has been shown. The RARE II process recommended the area for nonwilderness.

Tables C-1 and C-2 show the location and proximity of the Rawhide Roadless Area to other wilderness and population centers in Idaho, western Montana, and eastern Washington.

No comments were received specific to this area between the Draft and the Final EIS.

The management emphasis table on the following page shows the acres proposed to various resource management in each alternative.

# V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

## A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

Table C-29

### Rawhide Roadless Area Management Emphasis by Alternative

| Management Emphasis | Alternatives (thousand acres) |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                     | A                             | B   | C   | D   | E   | E1  | F   | G   | H   | I   | J   | K   |
| WILDERNESS          | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 4 4 | 0   | 0   |
| NONWILDERNESS       |                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Unroaded            | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Elk Winter          | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Timber/Wldlfl-Wtshd | 3 0                           | 2 6 | 3 0 | 2 4 | 1 4 | 1 4 | 0 7 | 3 1 | 2 1 | 0   | 2 1 | 2 7 |
| Timber/Visual-Rip   | 0 7                           | 0 3 | 0 3 | 1 8 | 1 5 | 1 5 | 3 7 | 1 1 | 2 2 | 0   | 2 1 | 0 1 |
| Timber/Special      | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0 5 |
| Special             | 0                             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Protection          | 0 7                           | 1 5 | 1 1 | 0 2 | 1 5 | 1 5 | 0   | 0 2 | 0 1 | 0   | 0 2 | 1 1 |
| TOTAL               | 4 4                           | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 |

#### Summary of Management Emphasis

|               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Wilderness    | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 4 4 | 0   | 0   |
| Nonwilderness |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Developed     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Decade 1      | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0 7 | 0   | 0 7 | 1 1 |
| Decade 5      | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 4 4 | 0   | 4 4 | 4 4 |
| Roadless      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Decade 1      | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 3 7 | 0   | 3 7 | 3 3 |
| Decade 5      | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

The entire area is designated to wilderness in Alternative I.

This emphasis would enhance the wilderness attributes of this area and provide for its logical inclusion in the much larger, adjacent Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area. Wilderness designation would be contingent upon acquisition of 900 acres of private land located in the south end of Rawhide Roadless Area. The naturalness of the area would remain and the natural setting as viewed from the Pierce-Superior Road #250 would be guaranteed.

The 36 MMBF of standing timber volume would not be available. Approximately 0.2 percent of the Forest's tentatively suitable timberland would not be available for production. The large acreage of lodgepole pine left uncut would become over-mature and susceptible to mountain pin beetle infestation. This would eventually result in a loss to the timber resource and an increase in fire hazard.

Mineral exploration and development would also be highly constrained. Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect either at the time of designation or as stated in designation legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry.

Effects of wilderness management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The scenery would not change within the area.
- Big game hunting and recreational hiking opportunities and activities would remain the same.
- The area would retain its values for essential habitat for the endangered gray wolf.
- Water quality stream habitat would be unchanged.
- The natural ecosystem would be protected.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. Timber and mineral industries would not be supported by this emphasis. Individuals who value wilderness would be supported. The Forest Service would incur additional costs associated with the necessary acquisition of private land. Individuals favoring roads for recreation would not be supported.

### 2. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife-Watershed

Timber production at varying investment levels would be the primary management goal. Minimum management constraints relating to elk security needs and water quality would be met.

All of the alternatives except Alternative I contain portions of the Rawhide Area designated to timber production. In Alternatives A (current direction), C, and G, approximately 70 percent of the area is designated. Alternative B and K (Preferred Alternative) designate 60 percent with Alternatives D, H, and J designating 47 to 55 percent. Alternatives E and E1 designate approximately 30 percent. In Alternative F, only 16 percent of the area would be managed with timber production as the primary goal.

Approximately 75 percent of the area would retain its roadless wilderness characteristics by the end of the first decade. However, the entire area would be developed by the end of the fifth decade.

Approximately 3,300 acres of tentatively suitable timberland would be available for harvest. The emphasis of harvest would be directed toward regeneration of the large acreage of lodgepole pine stands.

Mineral, oil, and gas resources would continue to be available; however, the potential for development of any of these resources is considered low. Exploration and development costs would be significantly lower.

Effects of timber/wildlife-watershed management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The landscape would be changed by roads and timber harvesting.
- Big game hunting and hiking would remain the dominant activities. The overall setting would be modified from semiprimitive to roaded natural.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat values would be impacted by roading. Impacts would be evaluated utilizing the formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The natural ecosystem would be disrupted particularly by regeneration of the lodgepole pine stands.
- Watershed qualities would be reduced by the roads and timber harvest, but established standards would be met.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. Timber and mineral resources would be available supporting the related industries. Individuals who value an undisturbed natural setting would not be supported.

### 3. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Timber/Visual-Riparian

All alternatives except Alternative I contain areas that have a goal of timber production within areas that fall into retention or partial retention VQO's and that have ecologically important riparian vegetation and features located along stream courses.

In Alternative F, 84 percent of the Rawhide Area is designated for this emphasis. Alternatives H and J designate 50 percent; Alternatives D, E, and E1, designate approximately 40 percent; Alternative G, 25 percent; and Alternative A (current direction), 16 percent. Two to seven percent of the area is designated for this management emphasis in Alternatives, B, C, and K (Preferred Alternative).

The lands in this category would lose a significant portion of their wilderness characteristics because of timber harvest activities and their direct proximity to larger areas managed for timber production.

Timber would be managed on an extended rotation basis, somewhat limiting return on timber investments.

Minerals exploration and development could take place. Costs of such activities would be lower due to roads.

The effect of timber/visual-riparian management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Viewing quality would be maintained to meet the visual quality objectives of retention and partial retention.
- Big game hunting and hiking would remain the same. The setting would be modified from semiprimitive to roaded natural, with roaded natural activities increasing.
- Security habitat for the gray wolf would diminish. Impacts would depend on the size of the affected areas and available mitigation measures such as road closures. The formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service would be utilized to evaluate impacts.
- Riparian zones and water quality would be protected, and where applicable, enhanced by prescribed management techniques.
- The natural ecosystem would be changed. The degree of change would be modified by constraints placed on type of harvest; harvest unit size, shape, and location; and management activities permitted in riparian zones.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation and wilderness. The timber and mineral industries would be supported by this emphasis. The degree of support for the timber industry would vary depending on the amount of land constrained by this emphasis. Individuals who value designated wilderness would not be totally supported by this emphasis. However, several of the values associated with wilderness, i.e., water and visual quality would be maintained.

4. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Protection

Lands in this category are unavailable for timber on other resource investments because of biophysical conditions. Acre variances between alternatives are created by other resource constraints.



Generally, these areas are small and scattered throughout surrounding management areas. Roads or trails could be constructed across such areas to access surrounding areas which allow timber harvesting and/or recreation. However, no direct investment activities would occur.

Some land is included in this emphasis in all alternatives except Alternative I. In Alternatives B, E, E1, and K (Preferred Alternative), approximately 34 percent of the Rawhide Area is designated. Alternative C designates 25 percent with Alternative A designating 16 percent. Other alternatives designated less than 5 percent.

Mineral exploration and development could take place, but costs of these activities would depend on the limited access.

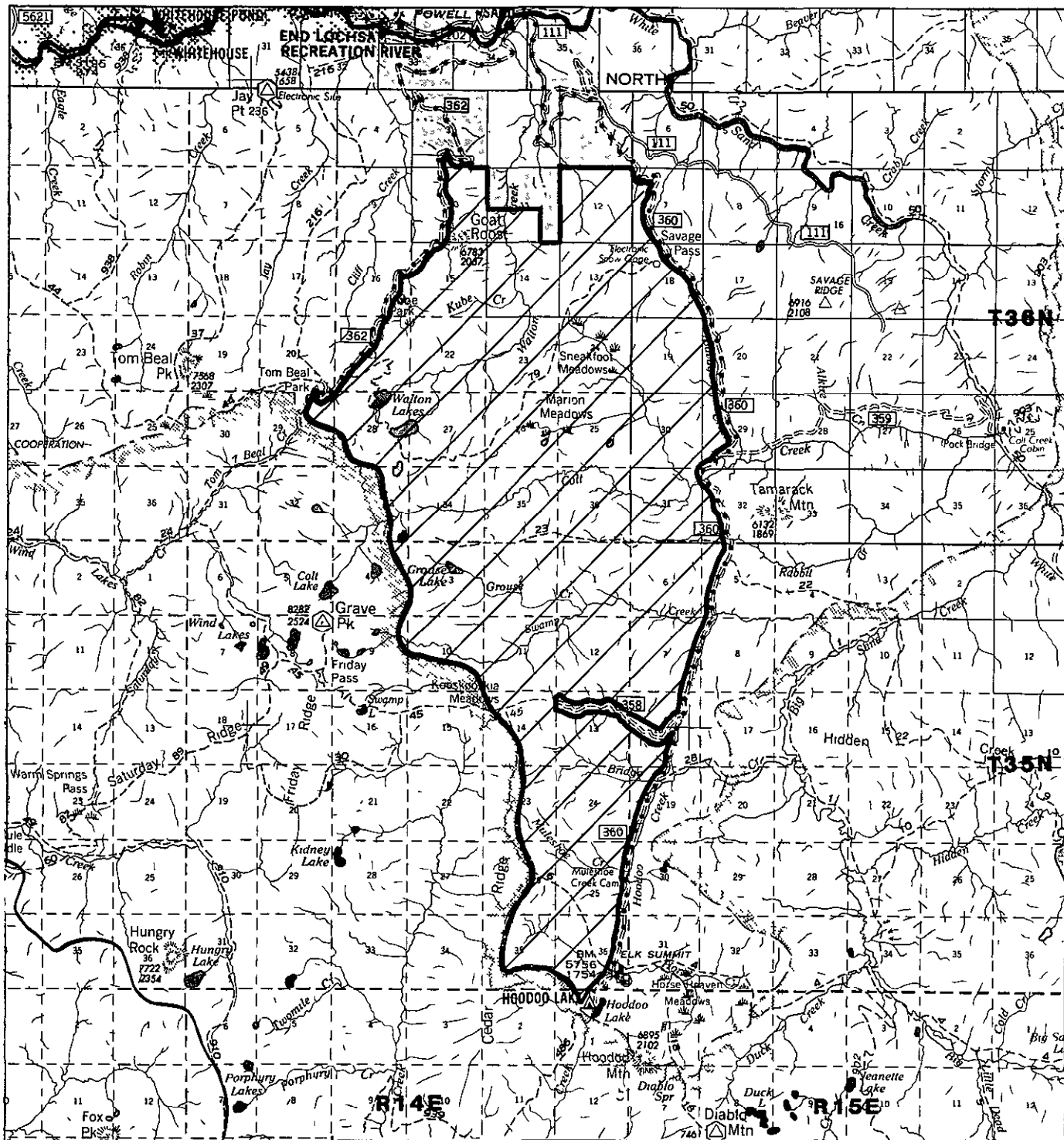
None of the areas proposed for such emphasis would meet the acreage criteria for wilderness consideration. Their other wilderness characteristics would be lost if surrounding areas were roaded. Timber would not be available for harvest.

Nonpriced resource impacts would mirror those of surrounding management areas. The essential gray wolf security habitat values of the affected areas would be impacted if the surrounding areas are roaded. Specific impacts would be evaluated utilizing the formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Social and economic effects relate to timber and wilderness values. The local timber industry would not be supported, although economic impacts would be minor. Wilderness advocates would not be supported.

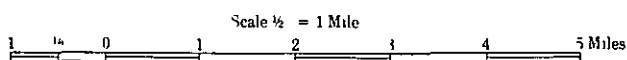


SNEAKFOOT MEADOWS ROADLESS AREA



## CLEARWATER FOREST PLAN 1987

### 1314 - SNEAKFOOT MEADOWS ROADLESS AREA



TOTAL ACRES 22,334

## SNEAKFOOT MEADOWS ROADLESS AREA (X1314)

| Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|-------------|-----------|
| 22,334      | 22,334    |

### I. DESCRIPTION

The Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area is located just west of the Bitterroot Mountain range near the southeast corner of the Clearwater Forest in Idaho County. It is nearly 125 miles east from Orofino, Idaho, via the Elk Summit road #360 and U.S. Highway 12. It is also approximately 60 miles southwest of Missoula, Montana, via the same road and highway.

It is bounded and accessed by the low-standard, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Elk Summit Road #360 on the east and another low-standard, CCC road #362, (the Tom Beal Road) along the northwest side. The interior is accessed by five separate trails, most of which are low-standard, fire control trails. The west side is bounded by the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and the north side by private land. A primitive road intrudes about 1 1/2 miles off the Elk Summit road toward Kooskooskia Meadows. At one time it extended all the way to the meadows but since has been blocked and is now used as a trail.

Except for the private land at the north end, the area is surrounded by other roadless land. To the west is the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, to the east is the North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area, and to the northwest is the Lochsa Face Roadless Area.

Sneakfoot is a complex landscape with a dominance of gentle, rolling terrain with high water tables, wet meadows, and meandering streams. Also it has high elevations generally above 6,000 feet, glacial rocky slopes and peaks with several large cirque basins, enclosed lakes, and fast moving crystal clear streams. Peaks average above 7,000 feet with a top elevation of 7,900 feet.

The area is underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. In the northern portion the area is underlain by highly metamorphosed rocks of the Precambrian Wallace formation consisting of calc-silicate gneiss and schist. Glacial till material was deposited over much of the area by Pleistocene Alpine glaciation resulting in poor drainage.

All but one of the of the major creeks drain into White Sand Creek eventually. Walton Creek at the north-end drains directly into the Lochsa River. Five lakes are contain within this area; the two largest are Walton Lakes.

From a vegetative standpoint, 90 percent of the area is within the western spruce-fir ecosystem. The major habitat type is subalpine fir with some grand fir and possibly some western redcedar in lower Walton Creek. Major species include subalpine fir, Englemann spruce, and lodgepole pine. Shrub areas are dense with menzeisia, alder and willow; the latter two occurring in wetter areas.

Major attractions are: the scenery, such as, meadows (Sneakfoot, Marion, and Kooskooskia); the wildlife, especially moose particularly near the Elk Summit Road; and the streams and lakes. Probably the most significant attraction is the access to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Recreation is related closely to the major attractions; scenic viewing, hiking, camping (especially along the Elk Summit Road) big-game hunting, and stream and lake fishing.

## II. CAPABILITY

### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

With the exception of the primitive Kooskooskia Meadows Road, the area has very low impairments to natural integrity and appearance. Several of the trails, notably the trail from the Tom Beal Road to Walton Lakes, are very evident on the landscape. There is also some evidence of overuse around Walton Lakes, but overall the effects are insignificant.

The area resembles the adjacent Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, as the boundaries between the two areas are indistinguishable.

### B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS

Noise from traffic on the Tom Beal and Elk Summit Roads is probably the only external disturbance and is limited to less than 1/2 mile because of terrain and vegetation. Visually, there is virtually no disturbance from vehicles or activity along either road, at the Colt Creek Campground, or at any of the undeveloped campsites along the roads.

Within the area, potential disturbance is even less than from without, although brief encounters with hikers or horseback riders on the trails or at the lakes are possible.

The Tom Beal Road is the only area from which some activity outside the area may be viewed, and all of it is distant views.

Hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, scenic and wildlife viewing and photography, hunting, and lake and stream fishing are the major primitive recreation. Cross-country travel by foot or horseback is very difficult at best, with the result that much of the interior area receives very little use.

Trails #6 and #79 are closed to motorized use. The other trails are generally impassible to trail bikes so in essence, the entire area is closed to motorized use, mainly for the protection of the contiguous Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

For all practical purposes then, the area is currently being managed and used as a defacto wilderness.

### C. SPECIAL FEATURES

Within the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area is an area varying from 620 to 1,950 acres encompassing Sneakfoot Meadows which has been proposed as a research natural area. The aquatic ecosystem as well as the surrounding subalpine fir habitat, with a dense stand of old-aged Engelmann spruce, are the key features of this proposal.

The Elk Summit moose herd is probably the largest concentrated moose population in northern Idaho. Because so little is known of the habitat-requirements for this unique animal, studies are being conducted through tagging, radio collaring, and observing animal behavior during different seasons of the year. Until specific requirements are known, the habitat is being managed for maximum protection of the animals. They are readily observed during the summer months throughout the area, especially near the meadow areas and along the roads.

Although no verified sightings or other confirmed evidence of the endangered gray wolf exists in the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area, habitat conditions conducive to the wolf have resulted in designation of the area as essential habitat. The management of an adequate prey base (primarily elk) and restrictions on motorized road-use are two major components for protection and enhancement of this endangered species.

The area has a history of early day trappers.

Muleshoe Creek camp along the Elk Summit Road has been the base for outfitter and guide services for many years.

### D. EFFECT OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON THE WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES

Since the area is contiguous to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the size and shape are sufficient.

### E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

Being contiguous to an existing wilderness, surrounded on two sides by well defined but low-standard roads, and having no private land or other conflicting uses makes the area easily manageable as part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness with very little change. Potential timber harvesting on the private land along the northern boundary would better define that boundary, and yet pose no conflict with use within the area.

This area was once part of the Elk Summit Planning Unit and was not part of the RARE II process.

## III. AVAILABILITY

### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Recreation - While there are potential developed recreational sites, the current and anticipated demands appear to be less than the existing facilities found along the Elk Summit Road and at the end of the road at Hoodoo Lake.

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2. Wildlife and Fish - Other than the moose mentioned previously, elk, mule deer, and bears are also present. There is no elk winter range, only summer range. Other species common to the Forest are also found here. Fishers were planted here many years ago and may be seen occasionally.

The area's streams are an important native fishery habitat, as well as providing high quality water to the larger White Sand Creek, which is a key steelhead trout and chinook salmon spawning and rearing stream. Habitat management may be needed to perpetuate free flowing and unobstructed streams for both resident and anadromous fishery.

The two Walton Lakes support a fishable trout population and are a popular place because they are a short distance from the Tom Beal Road.

3. Timber - The Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area has 19,814 acres of land suitable for producing timber. There is an estimated 213 MMBF of standing sawtimber, much of it of questionable commercial value under current economic market conditions.

Much of the area has an early 1900 catastrophic fire history with the result that large acreages of slow growing, seral-type, lodgepole pine still occupy the sites. Regeneration is very slow in the high water tables and intermingled thin rocky soils.

4. Minerals - With the exception of a small section of moderate potential for gold and titanium around Elk Summit and Hoodoo Lake, overall potential for minerals is low.

5. Cultural Resources - Cultural resource inventory lists a CCC camp, Rabbit Creek cabin, and the Frank Kube trapper cabin.

A number of known Nez Perce Indian trails and early day trapper trails existed in the unit.

#### B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No important management considerations pertain to this roadless area.



### C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-30.

X1314-Sneakfoot Meadows

| <u>Description</u>   |       |        | <u>Description</u>    |       |        |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|-------|--------|
| Gross Acres          | Acres | 22,334 | Gray Wolf Hab.        | Acres | 22,334 |
| Net Acres            | Acres | 22,334 | Peregrine Fal. Hab.   | Acres | 0      |
| Recreation           |       |        | Wildlife - Big Game   |       |        |
| Primitive            | RVD's | 383    | Big Game              |       |        |
| Semiprim Nonmotor.   | RVD's | 0      | Summer Habitat        | Acres | 0      |
| Semiprim Motor.      | RVD's | 0      | Winter Habitat        | Acres | 0      |
| Roaded Natural       | RVD's | 1,367  | Elk                   |       |        |
| Range                |       |        | Summer Habitat-Key    | Acres | 22,334 |
| Existing Obligated   |       |        | Winter Habitat-Key    | Acres | 0      |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0      | Significant Fisheries |       |        |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0      | Stream Miles          | Miles | 62     |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0      | Stream Habitat        | Acres | 136    |
| Existing Vacant      |       |        | Lakes                 | No.   | 4      |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0      | Lakes - Habitat       | Acres | 80     |
| Allotments           | No.   | 0      | Water Developments    |       |        |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0      | Existing              | No.   | 0      |
| Proposed             |       |        | Minerals              |       |        |
| Suitable             | Acres | 0      | Potential Hardrock    |       |        |
| AUM's                | AUM's | 0      | Very High             | Acres | 0      |
| Timber               |       |        | High                  | Acres | 0      |
| Tentative Suitable   | Acres | 19,814 | Moderate              | Acres | 640    |
| Standing Volume      | MMBF  | 213    | Low                   | Acres | 21,694 |
| Corridors            |       |        | Claims                | No.   | 0      |
| Exist. and Potential | No.   | 0      | Potential Oil and Gas |       |        |
| Wildlife - T&E       |       |        | Very High             | Acres | 0      |
| Grizzly Bear         |       |        | High                  | Acres | 0      |
| Habitat - Sit. 1     | Acres | 0      | Moderate              | Acres | 0      |
| Habitat - Sit. 2     | Acres | 0      | Low                   | Acres | 22,334 |
| Habitat - Sit. 3     | Acres | 0      | Oil and Gas Leases    |       |        |
| Bald Eagle Hab.      | Acres | 0      | Leases                | No.   | 0      |
|                      |       |        | Leased Area           | Acres | 0      |

### IV. NEED

If managed as wilderness, the area would provide a variety of successional vegetative changes and a wide variety of vegetative types including large areas of aquatic ecosystems in conjunction with wet meadows, bog areas, and meandering streams. A unique, rather large moose population would be maintained in a natural condition and a pristine stream fishery source would be protected.

Public involvement and concern for this area as well as the two adjacent roadless areas comprising the "Elk Summit" area goes back to the time when the area was part of the original Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. When the 1,239,840-acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness was classified in 1963, this area was declassified and was to be managed for full multiple-use management. Although there were many pro and con comments at that time, the decision was to exclude the "area south of Powell Ranger Station draining into the Lochsa River which was traversed by roads and supports commercial timber needed for local use." (From the decision establishing the wilderness by the Secretary of Agriculture, Orville L. Freeman, January 11, 1963.)

Since that time many of those unhappy with the decision have been involved in early unit planning efforts. The Elk Summit Unit Plan was initiated in 1970 under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and culminated in a final Environmental Statement and Supplemental Statement published in 1975 and 1979 respectively. Both the original statement and the supplement were appealed with the result that the roadless nature of the area would remain status quo until this Forest planning effort was completed. Most of the public interest during the past 23 years has centered on re-establishing wilderness or some type of unroaded management for the Elk Summit area with most wilderness interest in the Sneakfoot Meadows area. Other major concerns have been expressed to protect the streams and fishery resource, the moose population, and the aesthetics of the area and to recognize the marginal nature of the timber resource.

Because the area was not included in the RARE II process, there were no recommendations for or against wilderness.

Tables C-1 and C-2 show the location and proximity of the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area to other wilderness and population centers in Idaho, western Montana, and eastern Washington.

All fifty of the comments received on this area between the Draft and the Final EIS recommended leaving the Elk Summit area undeveloped. Reasons given were:

1. "One of prettiest places I have visited in Idaho."
2. "Forest Service has ignored the wildlife and recreational assets of this area and the plea from fishermen, hiker, horsepacker, and conservationist to provide protection for this extensive roadless area."
3. "Moose population is also very dense."
4. "I am not pleased with prospect of financing deficit timber sales which will degrade the very stream in which salmon and steelhead are born. The stable slopes and erosive soils here do not provide a stable base for logging operations."
5. "If you log off that old growth the moose winter under, they will probably winter kill or move."
6. "Why the rush, why all the roads with the depressed lumber market such as it is? Don't want to see it all chopped up with clearcuts and roads."

Approximately 84 percent of the respondents recommended adding the area to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Between the Draft and the Final approximately 6,000 acres between Sneakfoot Meadows and the Kooskooskia Road was changed from C2S to C6 (unroaded), in the Preferred Alternative K. This change would provide additional protection to the moose population.

The management emphasis table on the following page shows the acres proposed to various resource management in each alternative.

## V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

Table C-31

#### Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area Management Emphasis by Alternative

| Management<br>Emphasis | Alternatives (thousand acres) |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                        | A                             | B    | C    | D    | E    | E1   | F    | G    | H    | I    | J    | K    |
| WILDERNESS             | 0                             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8 0  | 8.0  | 0    | 21.2 | 21 2 | 22 3 | 8 0  | 8 7  |
| NONWILDERNESS          |                               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Unroaded               | 0                             | 0    | 8.0  | 8 0  | 0    | 0    | 14.0 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 6 0  |
| Elk Winter             | 0                             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Timber/Wldlf-Wtshd     | 17.0                          | 14.5 | 10 7 | 0 7  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0.8  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Timber/Visual-Rip      | 4 0                           | 1 3  | 1 0  | 0 8  | 1 1  | 1 1  | 0 7  | 0 3  | 1 1  | 0    | 0 5  | 0 7  |
| Timber/Special         | 0                             | 0    | 0    | 10 2 | 11 4 | 11 4 | 5 4  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 11 2 | 4 6  |
| Special                | 0                             | 0    | 1 8  | 1 8  | 1 8  | 1 8  | 1.8  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1 8  | 1 9  |
| Protection             | 1 3                           | 6.5  | 0 8  | 0 8  | 0    | 0    | 0 4  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0 8  | 0 4  |
| TOTAL                  | 22 3                          | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 |

#### Summary of Management Emphasis

|               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |     |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Wilderness    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8.0  | 8.0  | 0    | 21.2 | 21 2 | 22 3 | 8.0  | 8 7 |
| Nonwilderness |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |     |
| Developed     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |     |
| Decade 1      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 5 8 |
| Decade 5      | 15 3 | 15 3 | 11 3 | 11 3 | 11 3 | 11 3 | 4 5  | 1 0  | 1 0  | 0    | 11 3 | 5 8 |
| Roadless      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |     |
| Decade 1      | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 22 3 | 14.3 | 14 3 | 22 3 | 1 1  | 1 1  | 0    | 14 3 | 7 9 |
| Decade 5      | 7 0  | 7.0  | 11.0 | 11 0 | 3 0  | 3.0  | 17 8 | 0 1  | 0 1  | 0    | 3 0  | 7 9 |

## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

Seven of the twelve alternatives contain portions of the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area designated as wilderness. Alternative I recommends the entire area as wilderness while Alternatives G and H designate only slightly less at 95 percent. Alternatives E, E1, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) recommend 35 to 39 percent of the area. This is for the most part the area south of the Kooskooskia Road and adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

The wilderness resource would be maintained under this management emphasis because the natural condition of the area would be retained.

The market resource is adversely affected, because lands designated wilderness are not available for production of commodities, primarily timber. Adverse impacts are least in those alternatives which designate lesser amounts of wilderness and increase as the wilderness designation increases.

Adverse impacts are minimal in Alternatives E, E1, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) because areas proposed as wilderness are quite marginal for timber production. Alternatives G, H, and I, on the other hand, would exclude timber harvest on an estimated additional 10,000 acres of suitable timberland. In Alternative I about 213 MMBF of standing timber or about 1 percent of the Forest's timberland would be unavailable.

Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect when land is classified as wilderness or as stated in legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Mineral development would be extremely costly because of access and other restrictions required to protect wilderness.

Effect of wilderness management on nonpriced resource value are:

- The natural landscape would not be disturbed.
- The primitive recreational experiences of visitors would be enhanced with the wilderness emphasis.
- Essential security habitat values for the gray wolf would be retained. The elk prey base might not increase to its full potential because of restricted management of winter range which is probably the limiting factor on the elk population in this area.
- Water quality and anadromous fish would benefit, because sediment levels would remain at low levels.
- Vegetative diversity would tend toward old growth.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. Since wilderness precludes timber harvest and significantly limits mineral development, the related industries would not be supported. The publics valuing wilderness would be supported as well as those recreationists who desire to view the area as natural landscape. Those favoring roaded natural recreation would not be supported.

Outfitter/guide businesses would benefit, because they would continue to provide visitor access to the wilderness.

2. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Unroaded

Four of the twelve alternatives designate some portion of the Sneakfoot Meadows Area to unroaded management. Alternative F designates 63 percent. In Alternatives C and D nearly 36 percent is designated. Alternative K (Preferred Alternative) designates 27 percent as unroaded. It should be noted, however, that Alternatives C and D do not provide the additional 8,700 acres of recommended wilderness that Alternative K does. Alternatives F and K (Preferred Alternative) would protect the wilderness resource more than Alternatives C and D.

The wilderness resource is generally protected except for related trail maintenance and construction. These activities would be noticeable but would not significantly alter wilderness characteristics to preclude later designation to wilderness.

Unroaded designations in Alternatives C and D would have no effect on the timber market resource during the first two decades due to low market values and the estimated high costs to access such areas. Regardless of designation, these areas would not be entered for timber harvest in the near future. After three to five decades, tentatively suitable timberlands in this 8,000 acre-area would still be unavailable for harvest when market values and access costs are considered.

Unroaded designation of the 14,080 acres in Alternatives F and K would make tentatively suitable timberland unavailable for harvest.

Mineral exploration and development could take place, but costs of such activities would be high due to the lack of roads. Removal of common variety minerals would not be permitted.

Effects of unroaded management on nonpriced resource values are:

- A natural landscape would be maintained.
- Primitive and semiprimitive recreation would be retained, and roaded natural recreation would remain at low levels, especially in Alternative F.
- Essential gray wolf habitat would remain in a near natural condition with intrusions by man being mostly confined to travel along trails.

- Big-game cover/forage ratios would be determined mostly by wildfire but could be modified by prescribed fire.

- Water quality and fish habitat would remain in near natural conditions. Fisheries habitat improvement projects are not likely in the upper reaches of the streams involved. Periodic stocking of lakes with trout would continue.

Economic and social effects are negligible for Alternatives C and D because the area designated unroaded in these alternatives is unlikely to be developed regardless of designation. Alternative F would remove about 5,000 acres of tentatively suitable timberland from development. The wood product industry would not be supported. Backpackers, stock users, and those who desire to keep the area in a natural condition are supported by Alternative F. People desiring more area for roaded natural recreation are not supported. Wilderness advocates would be partially served in that the significant wilderness characteristics and attributes would be maintained.

### 3. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife-Watershed

Under this management emphasis, timber production at varying investment levels would be the primary management goal. Minimum management constraints relating to elk security needs and water quality would be met.

Five of the twelve alternatives contain areas with this management emphasis in the Sneakfoot Meadow Roadless Area. Alternative A (current direction) designates 76 percent; Alternative B, 65 percent; Alternative C, 48 percent; Alternative D, 3 percent; and Alternative G, 4 percent.

As this management is applied, areas would be roaded and timber harvested, making the affected portions of the area no longer suitable for wilderness designation.

In all alternatives that permit development for timber, only Alternative K (Preferred Alternative) would have any development (26 percent) by the end of the first decade. The fifth decade varies widely between alternatives. Alternatives A and B would be 69 percent developed by the end of the first decade, while Alternatives D, E, E1, and J would be 51 percent developed. Alternatives F and K (Preferred Alternative) would have 74 to 80 percent roadless land remaining after the fifth decade while approximately 96 percent would remain roadless in Alternative H.

In the first two decades, Alternatives A (current direction), B, and C strongly support timber production on about 50 percent of the area.

Mineral exploration and development would be less costly due to improved access. Local aggregate sources would be developed as needed by new road construction.

Effects of timber/wildlife-watershed management on nonpriced resource values are:

- In Alternative A and B, nonmarket values would be heavily impacted because lands would be included in the suitable timber that could not readily contribute their share of harvest goods. This could cause over harvest in the remainder of the area to meet timber sell targets.
- Areas of sensitive visual quality such as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and wilderness access corridors would be adversely impacted throughout the northeast half of the area in Alternatives A (current direction), B and C. Adverse impacts would be limited to the northern 3 to 4 percent of the area in Alternatives D and G.
- Recreation would shift from primitive and semiprimitive to roaded natural as additional roads were constructed. Hunting, fishing, and camping would be the dominant activities. Gathering of Forest products would increase.
- Adverse impacts to essential gray wolf security would occur due to increased access. These impacts could be greatly mitigated by road closures.
- The most critical factors relating to elk habitat are winter range and, to a considerably lesser degree, cover/forage ratio. Winter range would remain the dominant factor in all alternatives with security areas becoming more important in those alternatives that greatly improve cover forage ratios. Road management to control open road density would be key to actually increasing big-game populations.
- Alternatives that allow little or no development have the least potential for increasing elk populations above the present levels but have the greatest likelihood of maintaining the advancing vegetative successional stages towards climax species on winter range.
- Moose habitat could be adversely affected by Alternatives A (current direction), B and C in particular. However, road closures and protection and improvement of winter range could improve the habitat through the resultant cover/forage ratios. Alternatives D and G would have minimal effects on moose habitat.
- Although minimum viable fish standards would be met, water quality and anadromous fish would suffer from sediment in the streams.

Social and economic effects relate to timber, wilderness, anadromous fisheries, and recreation. The wood products industries are strongly supported in Alternatives A (current direction), B, and C. Support is marginal in Alternatives D and G. Publics favoring wilderness would not be supported. Sport and commercial user groups would not be wholly supported. Recreationists desiring a primitive/semiprimitive experience would not be served. Those desiring roaded natural settings would be supported.



4. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Visual-Riparian

Eleven of the twelve alternatives contain areas with the goal of timber production that fall into the retention/partial retention VQO's and areas of ecologically important streamside vegetation and features. Timber would be harvested on an extended rotation.

In Alternative A (current direction) about 18 percent of the Sneakfoot Meadows Area is designated to this emphasis. Alternatives B, C, D, E, E1, and H designate about 5 percent with Alternatives F, G, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) designating about 3 percent.

Where this management is applied, the wilderness resource would generally be foregone due to roading and timber harvest. Differences in the percentage of the area designated would depend on neighboring management area designations. These adjacent designations would contain the primary forces that would shape these areas.

The timber market resource is moderately supported by this management because it allows some timber harvest while mitigating the effects of logging on visual quality and riparian areas.

Mineral exploration and developments would be more costly because of mitigation measures needed to protect the key visual and riparian values. However, costs would be somewhat offset by improved access.

Effects of timber/visual-riparian management on nonprice resource values are:

- There would be situations where visual quality is actually improved as well as situations where adverse impacts from adjacent areas are mitigated to varying degrees.
- Roaded natural recreation would be supported with fishing and hunting the dominant activities.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat would be disturbed if such areas or areas adjacent to them were roaded. The magnitude of the impacts would depend on the size of affected areas and the availability of such mitigation measures as road closures. Specific impacts will be determined utilizing the formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Impacts to big-game habitat would be minimal.
- Water quality and anadromous fish would be maintained.

Economic and social effects relate to timber, anadromous fishery, recreation, and wilderness. While differences between alternatives are not readily measurable on the basis of this management, the emphasis is an appealing compromise between timber interests and other users. Timber harvest would be allowed at reduced levels with considerable effort and expense to offset negative impacts on visual quality and water. Anadromous fishery would

benefit. Publics advocating wilderness designation would not be supported. Recreationists favoring roaded natural settings would be served.

5. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Special

In Alternatives D, E, E1, and J, about 30 percent of the Sneakfoot Meadows Area located in the Swamp and Colt Creek drainages would be managed for maintenance of high water quality and anadromous fishery with timber harvest on suitable timberlands.

Approximately 46 percent of the area is designated timber/special in Alternatives D, E, E1, and J. This includes the Walton and Colt Creek areas. Alternatives F and K (Preferred Alternative) designate approximately 20 percent north of Sneakfoot Meadows mainly in the Walton Creek drainage. Because of the modification of the C2S and C6S management prescriptions to a single C8S prescription between the Draft and Final Plans, the Preferred Alternative K will provide more protection for big game. Moose will benefit also with closure of all new road construction to public motorized use.

Where applied, this emphasis would develop areas and preclude them for later consideration as wilderness. Wilderness characteristics would be impacted the most in Alternatives D, E, E1, and J and would be impacted moderately in Alternative F. Development would include roading and timber harvest as well as big game and fisheries improvement projects.

Timber production would be moderately supported. Harvest volumes and schedules would be reduced or timed to benefit both water quality and big-game habitat. Timber yield would be reduced from levels obtainable on a purely silvicultural basis with Alternative F causing reductions on the least amount of the area.

Any discovered minerals would be costly to develop because of opening restrictions needed to protect high water quality values.

Effects of timber/special management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Scenic views would be altered. Impacts would be lessened with 25 acres or less in harvest units. Where terrain and logging systems allow, cutting unit boundaries would be irregular in shape and adverse visual impacts would be short range, diminishing as cutover areas grow back. Alternative F would impact about half as much of the area as Alternatives D, E, E1, and J.
- Recreation would shift from a primitive or semiprimitive setting to a roaded natural directly in proportion to the area designated. Hunting, camping, and fishing would be the dominant activities. The opportunity for gathering Forest products would be increased.
- Gray wolf security habitat would be impacted during roading and timber activities. Post harvest impacts would be mitigated with road closures.

- Elk security areas would decrease, and forage habitat would increase. The resultant cover/forage ratio would be near optimum for elk summer range. Elk winter range management would become the critical factor if the advantages of improved summer range are to be realized. The above effects would be in proportion to the percent of area under this emphasis (24 percent Alternative F and I; 50 percent for Alternatives D, E, E1, and J).

- The present moose habitat would change little in Alternatives F and K (Preferred Alternative). Alternatives D, E, E1, and J have the potential to alter present habitat conditions on 50 percent of the area. If harassment is minimized by road closures and winter range is protected or improved, these changes could be positive by greatly improving cover/forage ratios.

- Water quality would remain at or near natural conditions. Anadromous fish habitat would benefit from improvements to the habitat which would be funded by timber sales.

Social and economic effects relate to wildlife, timber, anadromous fisheries, recreation, and wilderness. Hunters and others desiring a primitive/semiprimitive experience would not be supported. Hunters that measure the success of the hunt by whether or not they take game would be supported because success ratios for hunters without stock are higher under closed road conditions than in unroaded areas. Wood product industries would be moderately supported but at a cost. Timber removal would be more expensive than under purely silvicultural options and considerable volumes would be lost due to delay in removal of over-mature stands. Both sport and commercial fishers would be supported. Publics favoring wilderness designation would not be supported.

6. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Special

Seven of the twelve alternatives designate nearly 1,766 acres (8 percent) to research natural area (RNA) status. It would be located in the Sneakfoot Meadow area and would protect the aquatic ecosystem for research purposes.

While activities compatible within the RNA values would be supportive of the wilderness resource, all of the above alternatives except Alternative F would result in surrounding the area with roaded areas, making it unsuitable for later consideration as wilderness.

Between the Draft and Final Plan, 100 acres were added to RNA status resulting in 1,870 acres being designated.

This emphasis does not support the timber industry. Nearly 1,200 acres of tentatively suitable timberland would be permanently removed from the timber base.

Mineral development and exploration would not be permitted in the RNA's.

Effects of Special management on nonpriced resource values are:

- A natural landscape would be maintained.
- The present recreation values - fishing, hunting, backpacking, and horseback riding and associated activities - would remain unchanged. However, they could not be enhanced and would conform with RNA's policies.
- Big game and fisheries habitats would not be altered.
- Naturally occurring ecological forces would shape the biophysical characteristics of the area.

Economic and social effects relate to grazing, recreation, timber, and wilderness. Visitors who have grazed horses and mules in the meadows would no longer be allowed to do so. Economic losses due to excluding timber management would be nominal. Individuals supporting ecological research would be supported.

**7. Designation: Nonwilderness**  
**Management Emphasis: Protection**

Lands in this category are unavailable for timber or other resource investment purposes because of biophysical conditions or resource constraints.

Generally, these areas are small and scattered throughout surrounding management areas. Roads or trails could be constructed across such areas to access surrounding areas which allow timber harvesting and/or recreation. However, no direct investment activities would occur.

Seven of the alternatives contain areas designated for this management emphasis. Alternative B designates about 30 percent; Alternatives A (current direction), C, D, F, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate 2 to 5 percent as unsuitable.

This management emphasis primarily reflects what presently exists and doesn't propose significant changes or irrevocable decisions.

This management emphasis would generally have little effect on the wilderness resource because roading and timber harvest would be incidental or excluded. Inaccessible areas that are adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness would continue to retain their wilderness character. Isolated portions surrounded by lands with development would lose their wilderness character.

This management emphasis has little effect on timber production. These lands are either not capable of significant timber production, or not manageable with current knowledge and access systems.

Mineral resource impacts on exploration and development would vary with access being the determining factor.

Effects of protection management on nonpriced resource values are:

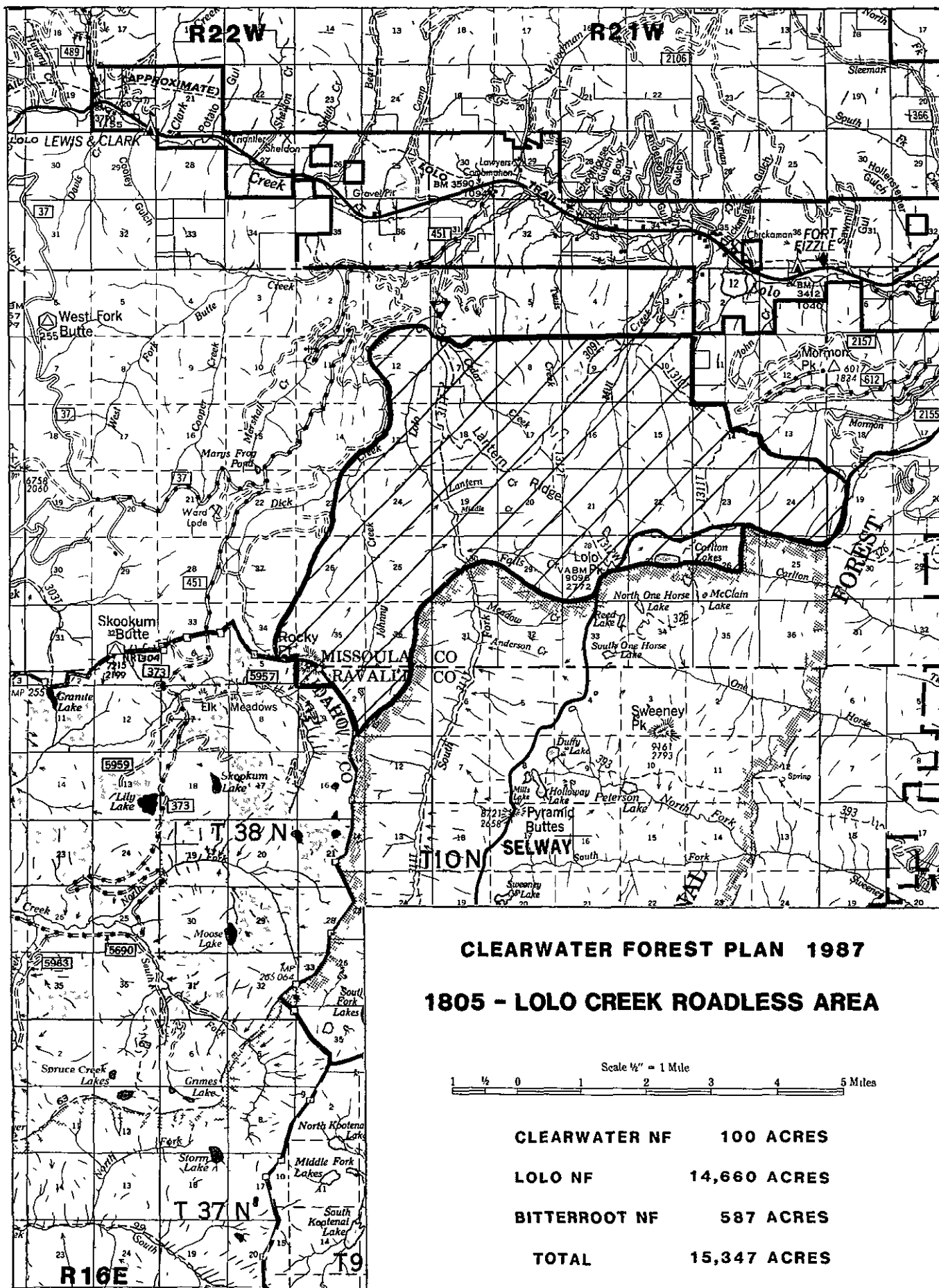
- Road construction through these areas to access surrounding suitable timberland would have essentially the same impacts as the timber/wildlife/watershed management emphasis.
- Essential gray wolf security habitat values could be impacted if such areas were roaded. Specific impacts would be evaluated utilizing the formal consultation process with the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Other impacts would also mirror those of the designations of surrounding areas.

Economic and social effects within these areas primarily reflect the same resource management emphasis that surround them.

- 1000 = 1000

1000 = 1000

LOLO CREEK ROADLESS AREA





## LOLO CREEK ROADLESS AREA (01805)

### LOLO, BITTERROOT, AND CLEARWATER NATIONAL FORESTS

|                       | Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Idaho-Clearwater NF   | 100         | 100       |
| Montana-Lolo NF       | 16,160      | 14,660    |
| Montana-Bitterroot NF | 587         | 587       |
| TOTAL                 | 16,847      | 15,347    |

#### I. DESCRIPTION

This roadless unit lies 15 miles southwest of Missoula, 17 miles northwest of Stevensville, and 6 miles west of Lolo, Montana. U.S. Highway 12 parallels the northern border at a distance of about 2 miles. From it, logging roads along Mill Creek, Cedar Creek and Dick Creek approach the northern and western boundaries. A road up Mormon Creek provides vehicle access to the eastern edge. Four system trails totaling 12 miles extend into and across the area.

The original RARE II inventory included 17,087 gross and 15,587 net acres. Road construction has reduced this area by 240 acres.

Because of the small acreages in the Clearwater (100 acres) and Bitterroot (587 acres) Forests, most of the discussion that follows is concerned with the Lolo Forest.

The Lolo Creek Roadless Area is situated immediately north of Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The most prominent feature is the lower valley of the South Fork of Lolo Creek which rises on the east to the summit of Lolo Peak, a difference of about 4,500 vertical feet. Most of the streams flow to the north into Lolo Creek, and the slopes are heavily timbered. Lolo Peak and Rocky Point peaks are not timbered because of rocky, shallow soils.

Most of the area is in the subalpine fir habitat series with a variety of understories. There are also small amounts of the Douglas-fir habitat types. These occur between 4,500 and 7,000 feet elevation. Most of this area is classified as commercial timberland.

The area lies within the border zone between the Precambrian Belt Supergroup and the granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Granite, mica schists, and gneisses are exposed over most of the area. To the north, altered Belt Group rocks are found.

The Lolo Creek Roadless Area provides habitat for a variety of game and nongame wildlife species commonly found in western Montana including pileated woodpecker, pine marten, mountain goat, hoary marmot, and other fur bearers. Visitors can often view deer and elk herds on summer range.

Currently, popular activities include hiking and trail biking, horseback riding, fishing, big-game hunting; and in winter, cross-country skiing and winter mountaineering sports activities.

## II. CAPABILITY

### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

Ecological processes and the natural landscape in parts of the area have been disrupted to a certain extent by past and present domestic grazing. Basically, vegetative communities in the unit are similar to those found in surrounding areas outside the roadless boundary.

The bulk of the area is in the subalpine fir habitat series with understories of smooth woodrush, beargrass, menziesia, beadrily, bedstraw, bluejoint, and twinflower. About 20 percent is in the Douglas-fir habitat series with understories of ninebark, blue huckleberry, twinflower, and pinegrass. The rest of the area is spruce/twinflower and scree.

While most of the animal species native to the area are found in the Lolo Creek Roadless Area, none are particularly dependent on wilderness for survival. Animals on summer range can be susceptible to human activity, and the area contains summer range. The area also contains a significant fisheries.

Air and water quality in the area are considered good.

The Lolo Creek Unit is significant because of its proximity to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Possible conflicts include a proposed ski area, potential for electronic site development, and possible mineral development. The Ward Lode Mine is located to the west with several of the claims staked in the Roadless Area. An irrigation dam is located on Carlton Lake, and the Carlton Ridge Primitive Road provides access to the dam.

There is not an outstanding opportunity for solitude due to moderate to heavy visitation, frequent air traffic, and noise from highways. A small ski run has been cut out by users along a portion of Lolo Peak Trail No. 1312. Several clearcuts and logging roads and the towns of Missoula, Lolo, and Florence, Montana can be seen from within the area. Portions of Highways 93 South and U.S. 12, the Ward Lode Mine, lookouts, a 500 KV twin powerline, and ranch buildings also impact the appearance of the area. Fort Fizzle National Historic Site is located about 3 to 4 miles to the north near Lolo Creek.

### B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS

Other than small scale mountain climbing opportunities, the area is limited in potential wilderness recreation because of the existing and potential conflicts.

### C. SPECIAL FEATURES

Most of the area is classified as commercial timberland and has 4,355 acres rated high to very high potential for minerals.

Significant features include the site for a potential ski area in the Lolo Peak/Carlton Ridge Area. (See Management Area 6 description in the Lolo Forest Plan.) On the southern boundary, Lolo Peak provides a prominent viewpoint to the north. It receives moderate to heavy visitation year round. This area is popular with cross-country skiers and is used for mountaineering.

The unit provides 35 percent semiprimitive motorized and 65 percent semiprimitive nonmotorized recreational settings. Main activities are four-wheeling on Carlton Ridge, trail biking, hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and environmental educational activities. Fishing and big-game hunting are also popular.

### D. EFFECTS OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES

The relatively small size and narrow shape of the area severely limits its potential wilderness attributes.

### E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

There are 1,500 acres of private land on the north end which would either have to be excluded or exchanged. As currently drawn, the southern boundary follows the existing line of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Most of the western side follows drainage divides and would be easily marked and identified on the ground. However, the entire northern border is arbitrarily drawn to follow property lines which are not well marked or easily identified.

The natural appearing landscape has been altered by the Four-wheel drive trail along Carlton Ridge, several miner's cabins, and the foundation of an old lookout tower.

## III. AVAILABILITY

### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Recreation - Primitive recreation is very good due to the steepness of terrain, rocky cliffs, and proximity to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Good terrain exists for "expert" skiers.

A portion of the roadless area was evaluated in a ski area feasibility study made by the Forest Service during the mid and late 1960's. Results of the study suggested the area had some potential for a ski area. Interest is expressed periodically by local citizens.

2. Wildlife and Fish - The area provides habitat for a wide variety of game and nongame wildlife species. Fisheries exist in the South Fork of Lolo, Mill, and Johnny Creeks. There are 1,311 acres of elk summer habitat and 530 riparian acres.

3. Livestock Operations - Portions of the East Fork/South Fork range allotment fall within this unit. The allotment is active and is permitted for 215 cow/calf pairs for approximately 292 AUM's.

Only about one-third of the Lolo Creek Roadless Area is considered to be suitable for grazing. The remaining two-thirds of the area is too steep and rocky. A small portion of the Anderson-Miller allotment is included, but the suitable range acreage is not significant.

4. Timber - This area contains 129 acres classed as nonstocked, 1,148 acres of seedlings and saplings, 1,654 acres of poles, 2,202 acres of immature sawtimber, and 7,888 acres of mature sawtimber. Of this, 10,154 acres are classified as commercial timberland. Only 6,208 acres are considered suitable for timber management in the Lolo Forest Plan. The suitable lands presently support a standing timber inventory of 45.6 MMBF with a long-term sustained yield of 1.06 MMBF annually.

5. Minerals - This unit contains all or parts of nine issued oil and gas leases which cover approximately 75 percent of the land. Ten mining claims associated with the Ward Lode Mine are located along the southwestern corner. These are in a zone of copper-lead-zinc-silver veins. Some gold values have also been found. The Forest inventory lists 4,355 acres of high to very high potential for minerals.

6. Cultural Resources - The Lolo Creek does not contain significant cultural resources. A few old miner's cabins remains. There are old lookout remains on Lantern Ridge. No prehistoric sites have been identified.

7. Research Natural Area - All but the northeast corner of the 920 acre Carlton Ridge Research Natural Area is located within the roadless area. The principle feature of the area is an extensive grove of alpine larch on well-developed soils. In addition, alpine larch and western larch are found at the same elevation which is uncommon. Studies indicate that hybridization between the two species has occurred on this site; this is one of the few areas known where this occurs.

8. T and E Species - Grizzly bears occupied the area in the historic past, but no bears have been sighted in many years.

#### B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There are no management considerations identified within the area.

# C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-32.

01805 - Lolo Creek

| <u>Description</u> |       | <u>Clwtr</u> | <u>Lolo</u> | <u>Bttrt</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Gross acres        | Acres | 100          | 16,160      | 587          | 16,847       |
| Net acres          | Acres | 100          | 14,660      | 587          | 15,347       |
| Recreation         |       |              |             |              |              |
| Primitive          | RVD's | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Semiprim. Nonmot.  | RVD's | 100          | 14,660      | 487          | 15,247       |
| Semiprim. Motor.   | RVD's | 0            | 0           | 100          | 100          |
| Roaded Natural     | RVD's | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Range              |       |              |             |              |              |
| Existing Obligated |       |              |             |              |              |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0            | 4,880       | 0            | 4,880        |
| Allotments         | No.   | 0            | 1           | 0            | 1            |
| AUM's              | AUM's | 0            | 292         | 0            | 292          |
| Existing Vacant    |       |              |             |              |              |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Allotments         | No.   | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| AUM's              | AUM's | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Proposed           |       |              |             |              |              |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| AUM's              | AUM's | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Timber             |       |              |             |              |              |
| Tentative Suitable | Acres | 0            | 10,154      | 163          | 10,317       |
| Standing Volume    | MBF   | 0            | 70.6        | 1.7          | 72.3         |
| Corridors          |       |              |             |              |              |
| Exist. & Potential | No.   | 0            | 1           | 0            | 1            |
| Wildlife - T & E   |       |              |             |              |              |
| Grizzly Bear       |       |              |             |              |              |
| Habitat - Sit. 1   | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Habitat - Sit. 2   | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Habitat - Sit. 3   | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Bald Eagle Hab.    | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| <u>Description</u> |       | <u>Clwtr</u> | <u>Lolo</u> | <u>Bttrt</u> | <u>Total</u> |
| Gray Wolf Hab.     | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |
| Peregrine Fal Hab  | Acres | 0            | 0           | 0            | 0            |

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(Table C-32 cont.)

01805 - Lolo Creek

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Wildlife - Big Game

Big Game

|                |       |   |     |     |       |
|----------------|-------|---|-----|-----|-------|
| Summer Habitat | Acres | 0 | 724 | 587 | 1,311 |
| Winter Habitat | Acres | 0 | 0   | 0   | 0     |

Significant Fisheries

|                |       |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|-------|---|---|---|---|
| Stream Miles   | Miles | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Stream Habitat | Acres | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Lakes          | No.   | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lake Habitat   | Acres | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Water Develop.

|          |     |   |   |   |   |
|----------|-----|---|---|---|---|
| Existing | No. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|----------|-----|---|---|---|---|

Minerals

Potential Hardrock

|           |       |     |        |     |        |
|-----------|-------|-----|--------|-----|--------|
| Very High | Acres | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0      |
| High      | Acres | 0   | 3,400  | 0   | 3,400  |
| Moderate  | Acres | 100 | 11,260 | 587 | 11,947 |
| Low       | Acres | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0      |
| Claims    | No.   | 0   | 10     | 0   | 10     |

Potential Oil and Gas

|           |       |     |        |     |        |
|-----------|-------|-----|--------|-----|--------|
| Very High | Acres | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0      |
| High      | Acres | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0      |
| Moderate  | Acres | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0      |
| Low       | Acres | 100 | 14,660 | 587 | 15,347 |

Oil & Gas Leases

|             |       |   |        |     |        |
|-------------|-------|---|--------|-----|--------|
| Leases      | No.   | 0 | 7      | 2   | 9      |
| Leased Area | Acres | 0 | 11,000 | 587 | 11,587 |

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IV. NEED

No interest has been shown for recommending the Clearwater or Bitterroot's portion of the Lolo Creek Roadless Area to wilderness or roadless designation.

During public review of the Lolo Forest Draft Plan, however, many comments were received in support of including this area in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Many respondents indicated support for the Governor's proposal for wilderness designation of the proposed area. Few comments were received that opposed any additional wilderness.

## V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

The management emphasis for the Lolo Creek Roadless Area is a combination of anagement prescriptions and alternatives from three National Forests, the Clearwater, Lolo, and Bitterroot. Because resources, uses, and land conditions are somewhat different on each Forest, neither the alternatives nor the management emphasis are fully integrated.

Further information on the specific alternatives and management emphasis for the Lolo and the Bitterroot National Forest's areas can be found in these Forest's Environmental Impact Statements for the Forest Plans.

The recommended wilderness/nonwilderness designation for the area is made and documented in the Lolo Environmental Impact Statement. This proposed designation has priority over all other land designations, and none of the three Forests can undertake any management activity other than current direction until such time that a record of decision is issued in conjunction with that document.

The management emphasis table on the following page shows the acres proposed to various resource management in each alternative.

Table C-33

Lolo Creek Roadless Area  
Management Emphasis by Alternative

|                   |         | *Alternatives (thousand acres) |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|-------------------|---------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Management        | Clw     | A                              | B             | C             | D             | E             | E1            | F             | G             | H             | I             | J             | K             |
| Emphasis          | Lolo/Bt | (a)                            | (e)           | (c)           | (b)           | (d)           | (d)           | (b)           | (b)           | (b)           | (f,g)         | (b)           | (d)           |
| WILDERNESS        |         | 0<br>(0)                       | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      |
| NONWILDERNESS     |         |                                |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Unroaded          |         | 0<br>(11 6)                    | 0<br>(10 7)   | 0<br>(6 2)    | 0<br>(14 9)   | 0<br>(10 7)   | 0<br>(10 7)   | 0<br>(14 9)   | 0<br>(14 9)   | 0<br>(14 9)   | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(14 9)   | 0<br>(10 7)   |
| Timber/Wldlfr-Wtr |         | 0<br>(2 1)                     | 0<br>(4 1)    | 0<br>(8 9)    | 0<br>(0 3)    | 0<br>(4 1)    | 0<br>(4.1)    | 0<br>(0 3)    | 0<br>(0 3)    | 0<br>(0 3)    | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0 3)    | 0<br>(4 1)    |
| Special           |         | 0<br>(1 5)                     | 0<br>(0 4)    | 0<br>(0 1)    | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0 4)    | 0<br>(0.4)    | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0)      | 0<br>(0 4)    |
| Protection        |         | 0 1<br>(0)                     | 0.1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0<br>(0)      | 0 1<br>(0)    | 0 1<br>(0)    |
| Total             |         | 0 1<br>(15 2)                  | 0 1<br>(15.2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0.1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) | 0 1<br>(15 2) |



(Table C-33 cont )

Summary of Management Emphasis

| Management             | A      | B      | C      | D      | E      | E1     | F      | G      | H      | I      | J      | K      |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Emphasis               | (a)    | (e)    | (c)    | (b)    | (d)    | (d)    | (b)    | (b)    | (b)    | (f,g)  | (b)    | (d)    |
| Wilderness-Clwtr       | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0 1    | 0      | 0      |
| -Other                 | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (15 2) | (0)    | (0)    |
| -Total                 | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 15 3   | 0      | 0      |
| Nonwilderness          |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Developed-Clearwater   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Decade 1               | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| Decade 5               | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| Developed-Other        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Decade 1               | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    |
| Decade 5               | (12 1) | (6 4)  | (10 5) | (1 4)  | (6 4)  | (6 4)  | (1 4)  | (1 4)  | (1 4)  | (0)    | (1 4)  | (6 4)  |
| Roadless-Clearwater    |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Decade 1               | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0      | 0 1    | 0 1    |
| Decade 5               | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0 1    | 0.1    | 0 1    | 0      | 0 1    | 0 1    |
| Roadless-Other         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Decade 1               | (15.2) | (15 2) | (15 2) | (15.2) | (15.2) | (15 2) | (15 2) | (15 2) | (15 2) | (0)    | (15 2) | (15 2) |
| Decade 5               | (3.1)  | (8 8)  | (4.7)  | (13.8) | (8.8)  | (8.8)  | (13.8) | (13.8) | (13 8) | (0)    | (13.8) | (8.8)  |
| Total Acres-Clearwater | = 0 1  |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| -Lolo, Bitterroot      | =15 2  |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Total Roadless Area    | =15 3  |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |

\* This roadless area is contiguous with the Lolo and Bitterroot (Bt) National Forests The numbers in parenthesis represent the alternatives and acres on these forests

Alternatives K and (d) = Preferred Alternative

## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

Lolo Creek is recommended for wilderness classification in Alternative I which is the only alternative that the total area or any portion is designated to wilderness.

Wilderness designation enhances the area's wilderness attributes. Any existing motorized activities would be eliminated.

The approximately 10,000 acres of land tentatively suitable for timber production would not be available. This would remove about 71 MMBF from the Lolo Forest's timber base.

Big game or elk management would not change. The area contains a small amount of summer habitat, and cover/forage ratios should not change much in the future except as influenced by wildfire control.

Current domestic livestock grazing of 292 AUM's could continue on portions of the area but use of motorized equipment would change.

Mineral exploration and development would also be highly constrained. Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect when designated wilderness or as stated in legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry.

Effects of wilderness management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural landscape would be maintained.
- Hunting would remain the popular recreation with the setting unchanged.
- Water quality and fisheries would be maintained at their present natural levels.
- Diversity would tend toward old growth without wildfire but could be improved depending on the fire control policy.

Social and economic effects center around wilderness, recreation, timber, and minerals. Many current activities could continue, but those which require motorized vehicles would not be allowed. The local timber and mineral industries would not be supported. Individuals favoring wilderness would be supported.

### 2. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Unroaded

Alternatives D, F, G, H, and J designate 97 percent of the Lolo Creek area to unroaded management; Alternative A (current direction), 76 percent; and Alternative C, 40 percent. Alternatives B, E, E1, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate 70 percent.

Mineral exploration and development could take place, but costs of such activities would be high due to access constraints. Removal of common variety minerals would not be permitted.

Effects of unroaded management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural landscape would be maintained.
- The semiprimitive/primitive settings would be maintained.
- Water quality and fisheries would not be affected.
- Age class distribution and diversity would be dominated by old growth; young age classes would be minimal.

Economic and social effects center around timber, wilderness and recreation. The area represents less than 1 percent of the tentative suitable timberland. The other resources would be maintained.

3. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife-Watershed

All alternatives designate some of the area to a timber/wildlife-watershed mixture except Alternative I. Alternatives B, E, E1, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate approximately 27 percent, and Alternative C designates 58 percent. Alternatives D, F, G, H, and J designate less than 2 percent.

Timber management would forego wilderness classification. By the first decade, the area would be roaded, and timber would be harvested.

Development and vegetative manipulation may be required to achieve wildlife habitat and forage management objectives. Timber harvest would occur where enough timber is available and could be used to achieve these objectives. Manipulation may include prescribed burning.

Mineral exploration and development would be less costly due to improved access. Local aggregate sources would be developed as needed by new road construction.

Effects of timber/wildlife-watershed management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Landscapes would be disturbed.
- Potential for semiprimitive recreation would be foregone by sometime after the end of the first decade.
- Water quality and fisheries impacts would be mitigated.
- Diversity would tend toward younger age classes with minimum old growth.

Social and economic effects center around timber, minerals and recreation. Recreation would change from a semiprimitive setting to roaded. The timber and mineral industries would be supported.

4. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Special

Special management emphasis include nonforest land, administrative sites, historical or cultural sites, mineral extraction sites, transportation and utility corridors, campgrounds, picnic areas, ski areas, and areas with concentrated public use.

Alternative A (current direction) designates 11 percent to these sites; Alternatives B, E, E1, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate 3 percent. The other alternatives do not include management for these sites.

5. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Protection

Lands in this category have been defined as being unavailable for timber or other resource investment purposes because of biophysical conditions. Acre variances between alternatives are created by other resource constraints.

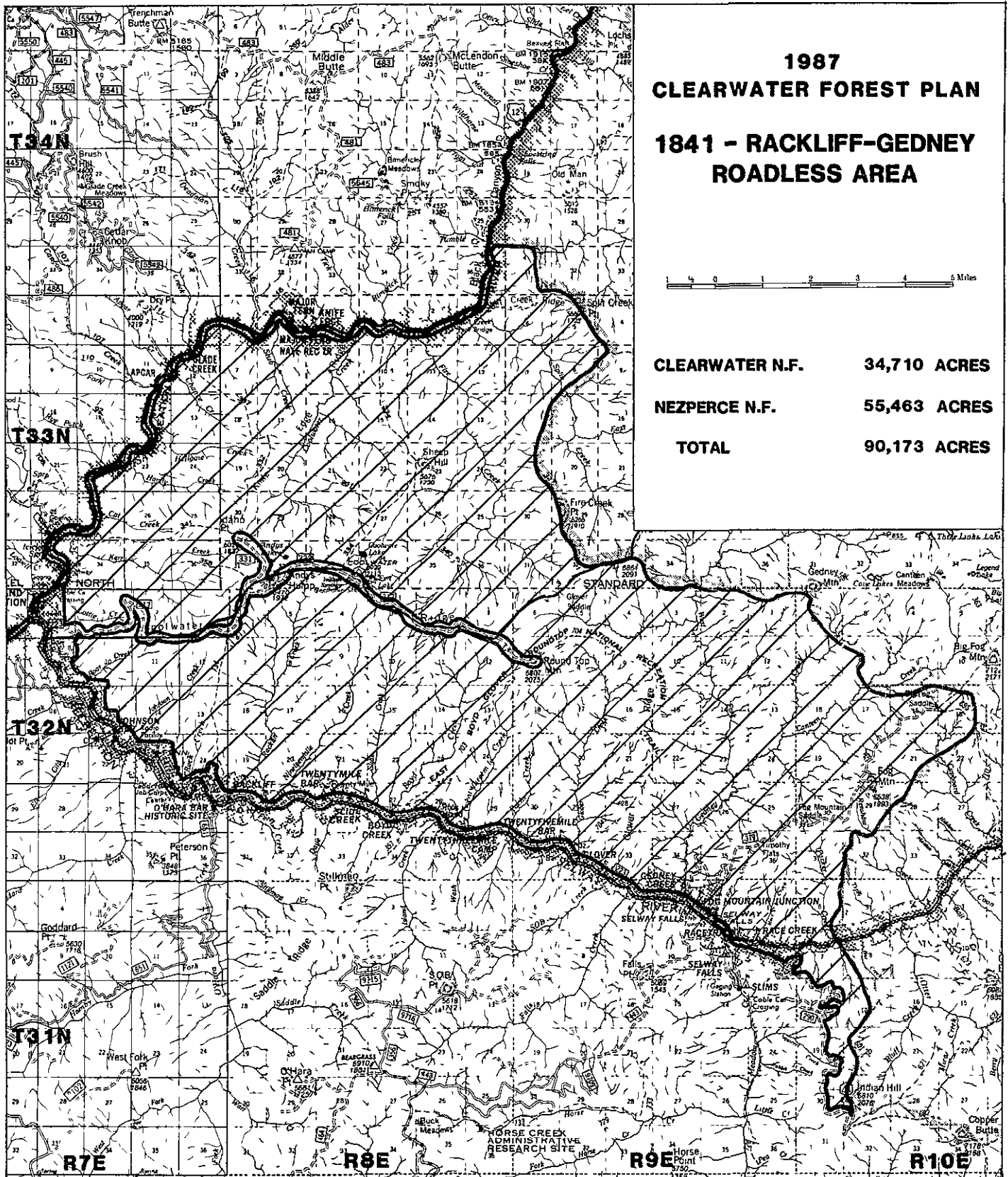
Generally, these areas are small and scattered throughout surrounding management areas. Roads or trails could be constructed across such areas to access surrounding areas which allow timber harvesting and/or recreation. However, no direct investment activities would occur.

Ten of the twelve alternatives contain lands designated to this category. Alternatives A (current direction), B, C, D, E, E1, F, G, H, J, and K (Preferred Alternative) designate approximately 100 acres on the Clearwater National Forest to such management.

Minerals exploration and development would take place, but costs of such activities would be high due to access constraints.

Since the affected area is so small, the impacts to both market and nonpriced resources would mirror those of surrounding areas.

**RACKLIFF-GEDNEY ROADLESS AREA**



## RACKLIFF-GEDNEY ROADLESS AREA (01841)

### CLEARWATER AND NEZ PERCE FORESTS

|                     | Gross Acres | Net Acres |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Idaho-Clearwater NF | 34,710      | 34,710    |
| Idaho-Nez Perce NF  | 55,463      | 55,463    |
| TOTAL               | 90,173      | 90,173    |

Part of the Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area is on the Nez Perce National Forest (55,463 acres) and part is on the Clearwater National Forest (34,710 acres). However, National Forest boundaries do not affect the wilderness capabilities of any roadless area, and the area is considered as a whole. The Nez Perce is the lead Forest. The following discussion includes the entire area.

#### I. DESCRIPTION

Area 1841 is generally the lands between the Lochsa and Selway Rivers from their confluence eastward to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary. The ridgetop that separates the drainages is also the boundary between the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests.

The area's northern boundary is the Lochsa River, and the southern boundary is 1/4 mile above the Selway River. This river corridor, established under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, contains the Selway River Road, several parcels of private property, Forest Service facilities, and numerous recreational developments. Although both the Lochsa and Selway are classified rivers, only the Lochsa corridor is included in the roadless area, because there is very little development there.

Coolwater Road 317, an unsurfaced, primitive road built in the 1930's, traverses about two-thirds of the boundary between the Forests, and deadends at Roundtop Mountain, 16 miles from the Selway River. This road furnishes access from the west. Fog Mountain Road 319 enters the area from the south and deadends at Big Fog Saddle, 13 miles from the Selway River. Both are routes to Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness trailheads. U.S. Highway 12 parallels the northern boundary of the area across the Lochsa River. A pack bridge at Split Creek furnishes access from the north.

Slopes are steep throughout, and the country is rugged. Such topographical features as Knife Edge Ridge are appropriately named. The river canyons range from 1,500 to 1,900 feet in elevation. The highest point in the area, Coolwater Lookout, is 6,926 feet.

The area is mostly underlain by highly metamorphosed metasediments of the Wallace formation. Course-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith is located in the northeast portion of the area. Small isolated blocks of diorite, granodiorite, and rhyolite also occur in the area.

Vegetation is largely a result of past wildfires. Although trees have re-established themselves on some sites, much of the area consists of extensive brush fields with islands of unburned trees and snags. Mixed conifer species occupy the lower elevations, and brush and meadows occupy the upper elevations.

Activities include hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing, horseback riding, berry picking, outfitter/guide services, and grazing.

There are many other special features including Native American religious sites and trails, a sheep drive trail, a grave site, the Boyd Glover Roundtop National Recreation Trail, high mountain lakes, bald eagles and osprey in the River corridors, and brush fields from the 1934 Pete King fire with excellent elk habitat (both elk summer and winter range) which supports a large elk herd. Scenic landmarks include Coolwater Ridge and Big Fog Saddle.

The area near Andy's Lake, Coolwater Lake, and Fire Lake have been glaciated, and contain landforms and cirque basins commonly found in the adjoining wilderness.

## II. CAPABILITY

### A. NATURAL INTEGRITY AND APPEARANCE

Except for the roads and a few trails, man's activities have had a small impact on natural processes in this area. Most of the trails are little used and receive little maintenance. Some, however, are heavily used by stock during the hunting seasons and are severely eroded.

Parts of the brush fields have been broadcast burned to improve big-game forage. Although these projects were begun in the 1960's, only the most recent burns would show effects apparent to untrained observers.

Some physical evidence of placer mining around the turn of the century can be found at China Flat on the Lochsa River near the mouth of Kerr Creek.

There is evidence of past logging activity in almost all major drainages on the Lochsa side of the area, and some on the Selway side. This logging was mostly for cedar products: poles, posts, and shakes. Remnants of old flumes still exist along the Lochsa.

In the early 1960's, erosion became a major problem on the steep southern slopes just below Coolwater Lookout. All grazing allotments were closed, and a bulldozer was brought in to terrace the hillside. These trenches are now revegetated.

Other impacts are located near the roads and are not extensive. Overall, less than 15 percent of the area is impacted.



## **B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCES OFTEN UNIQUE TO WILDERNESS**

Although the appearance of the area has been altered by 20th century wildfires, this is probably not an impact that is apparent to most visitors; there is little recent evidence of fire. Impacts on apparent naturalness are caused mainly by facilities and activities along the roads.

A short spur road leads from Coolwater Road to Idaho Point. A snow-measuring installation owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is located along this road.

A television receiving installation with antennas and a small block house is located near the Idaho Point junction. There is a short spur road at Remount that leads to an outfitter camp, which is occupied during the summer and fall.

Coolwater Lookout is located on the highest pinnacle in the area, and is visible from most of the higher elevations.

Trenches dug by bulldozers in the early 1960's to control erosion below the lookout are still visible.

## **C. SPECIAL FEATURES**

Opportunities for solitude vary throughout the area.

Traffic noise from U.S. Highway 12 is apparent in many parts of the Lochsa Face, and the highway is visible from much of it.

The view from the Coolwater ridgetop gives one an impression of vastness, especially on a clear day or clear night, but there are also intrusions. Although the Coolwater Road receives light use much of the year, traffic is heavy during the hunting season.

The mid-slope areas, especially those in the larger drainages, offer the highest opportunities for solitude. Topographic and vegetative screening are highest here, and few off-site intrusions are visible, especially in the stream bottoms, away from the ridgetop trails.

## **D. EFFECTS OF SIZE AND SHAPE ON WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTES**

Overall, these are somewhat limited because of the roads entering the area, but they exist nonetheless. Topographic and vegetative cover are significant over much of the area, and trails tend to concentrate visitors on ridgetops. The area is not without challenge and risk: there are cliffs and very steep slopes. Cross-country travel is often difficult, and it is sometimes a challenge to follow the trails. Hunters are injured or die in this area and in the nearby wilderness nearly every year.

The area is moderately diverse. Lakes are present as well as one of the larger tributaries of the Selway River. Vegetation is a diverse mix of trees, brush, and grass. The weather is changeable; snow is possible any month of the year. Trails are about the only recreational facility present, and they are of low standards.

## E. MANAGEABILITY AND BOUNDARIES

Boundaries of this area have not been adjusted since 1979, but an acreage recalculation has added 2,463 acres to the Nez Perce Forest portion of the area. For the most part, the boundaries follow well-defined topographical features. Some surveying and marking might be necessary to establish a wilderness boundary along the private property on the west and south sides.

Boundaries would probably have to be adjusted near the roads to allow for some activities using motorized equipment. The roads could be closed or converted to trails, but the costs in adverse public reaction would be great.

## III. AVAILABILITY

### A. OTHER RESOURCES

1. Recreation - Travelers driving U.S. Highway 12 consider the part of the area visible from the highway as pleasant scenery. The highway is a major recreational route.

Hunting, berry picking, and sightseeing are the principal uses; hunting is the most important. Commercial outfitters have base camps and stock facilities in the area, and many hunters bring in their own pack and saddle stock during the hunting seasons.

Access from U.S. Highway 12 is limited to several foot and horse trails crossing the river. There is a pack bridge at the Split Creek trailhead, but other river crossings are limited to low-water fords.

A road also follows the southern boundary of the area. Although at one time or another trails were built up almost every southside ridge from the river to the ridgetop, only a few are now maintained, and use is light. A National Recreation Trail has been established on the south side, but it is steep and hard to find in places, and is thus suitable only for the most hardy.

The main access route is Coolwater Road 317, which enters the area from the West and bisects it for 16 miles. It is not surfaced and becomes difficult to traverse in years of heavy rain and snow during hunting seasons. It is usually impossible to drive to the end of this road before July 4 because of snow.

2. Wildlife and Fish - The brush fields in the area supply browse for elk and other big game species. Elk populations have declined from those once found; one reason is that much of the vegetation has grown too high to furnish quality browse for the animals. In recent years, a modest program of prescribed burning has been conducted in an attempt to encourage new vegetation.

The Rackliff-Gedney area provides habitat for elk, mule and white-tailed deer, black bear, moose, mountain goat, and cougar. High quality elk summer range is found at the mid and high elevations, and the lower elevations are important winter range.

Glover Ridge, a flat, open ridge on the east side of the area, is a major elk-calving site. The only active grazing allotment in Rackliff-Gedney is also located on and around Glover Ridge.

Although bald eagles and osprey are found mainly in the river corridor, they are active in lower parts of the area as well. The entire area is potential wolf and grizzly bear habitat.

The area contains several streams on both the Lochsa and Selway sides of the divide that are potential spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous and native fish. These streams contain populations of both. All of the smaller streams contain fish, but few are important fisheries.

3. Livestock Operations - There is one cattle grazing allotment in the area on Glover Ridge. In addition, some grazing is allowed to commercial outfitters.

4. Timber - Tree species in the area include western redcedar, larch, douglas-fir, grand fir, ponderosa pine, and western white pine. At the higher elevations, lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce are found. Scattered whitebark pine stands are located along the ridgetop.

5. Minerals - There are several placer mining claims near the mouth of Kerr Creek. A small amount of placer mining took place near China flats near Kerr Creek around the turn of the century. The mineral potential for the area is low.

6. Cultural Resources - Coolwater Ridge, Knife Edge Ridge, and Ridgetop Trail 3A into the wilderness were used by Indian tribes in the past. Artifacts have been found on the ridgetops, and historic records have established the Coolwater Ridge route as a major avenue into the high country to the east.

There is at least one marked grave in the area.

7. Land Uses - There are no non-Federal lands in this roadless area.

#### **B. IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The Chance Creek drainage in the Clearwater National Forest portion of the area contains a small part of the Lochsa Research Natural Area (RNA), established by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1977. The RNA was established to protect and study the unique Pacific Coast vegetation types (coastal disjunct species) that occur along the lower Lochsa and lower Selway. Flowering dogwood and 14 other plant species that are normally found west of the Cascade Range occur in the RNA and are not found further east in the continental U.S.

Approximately 2,000 acres per year are planned for prescribed burning to improve wildlife habitat. The Selway and Lochsa Rivers will be managed according to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and individual river management plans.

# C. RESOURCE SUMMARY

Table C-34.

1841-Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area  
Nez Perce Forest Portion

| Category           | Unit  |       | Category              | Unit   |       |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|--------|-------|
| Gross Acres        | Acres | 55463 | Wildlife - Big Game   |        |       |
| Net Acres          | Acres | 55463 | Summer Habitat        | Acres  | 27085 |
|                    |       |       | Winter Habitat        | Acres  | 28378 |
| Recreation         |       |       | Specific-Elk          |        |       |
| Primitive          | Acres | 0     | Summer Hab.           | Acres  | 27085 |
| Semiprim.Nonmotor  | Acres | 55463 | Winter Hab.           | Acres  | 28378 |
| Semiprim.Motor.    | Acres | 0     | Specific-Deer         |        |       |
| Roaded Natural     | Acres | 0     | Summer Hab.           | Acres  | 27085 |
|                    |       |       | Winter Hab.           | Acres  | 28378 |
| Range              |       |       | Significant Fisheries |        |       |
| Existing Obligated |       |       | Stream Miles          | Miles  | 48    |
| Suitable           | Acres | 2362  | Stream Habitat        | Hab.ac | 46    |
| Allotments         | No.   | 1     | Lakes                 | No.    | 0     |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 158   | Lake Habitat          | Hab.ac | 0     |
| Existing Vacant    |       |       | Water Developments    |        |       |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0     | Existing              | No.    | 0     |
| Allotments         | No.   | 0     | Minerals              |        |       |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 0     | Hardrock Potential    |        |       |
| Proposed           |       |       | Very High             | Acres  | 0     |
| Suitable           | Acres | 2004  | High                  | Acres  | 0     |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 158   | Moderate              | Acres  | 0     |
| Timber             |       |       | Low                   | Acres  | 55463 |
| Tentative Suitable | Acres | 49160 | Mining Claims         | No.    | 0     |
| Standing Volume    | MMBF  | 312   | Oil & Gas Potential   |        |       |
| Corridors          |       |       | Very High             | Acres  | 0     |
| Exist.& Potential  | No.   | 0     | High                  | Acres  | 0     |
| Wildlife - T & E   |       |       | Moderate              | Acres  | 0     |
| Bald Eagle         |       |       | Low                   | Acres  | 55463 |
| Habitat            | Acres | 4160  | Oil & Gas Leases      |        |       |
| Gray Wolf          |       |       | Leases                | No.    | 0     |
| Habitat            | Acres | 55463 | Leased Area           | Acres  | 0     |
| Grizzly Bear       |       |       |                       |        |       |
| Habitat            | Acres | 55463 |                       |        |       |

Table C-35.

1841-Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area  
Clearwater Forest Portion

| Category           | Unit  |       | Category              | Unit   |       |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|--------|-------|
| Gross Acres        | Acres | 34710 | Wildlife - Big Game   |        |       |
| Net Acres          | Acres | 34710 | Summer Habitat        | Acres  | 19051 |
|                    |       |       | Winter Habitat        | Acres  | 13048 |
| Recreation         |       |       | Specific-Elk          |        |       |
| Primitive          | RVDs  | 27    | Summer Hab.           | Acres  | 19051 |
| Semiprim.Nonmotor  | RVDs  | 2040  | Winter Hab.           | Acres  | 13048 |
| Semiprim.Motor.    | RVDs  | 0     | Specific-Deer         |        |       |
| Roaded Natural     | RVDs  | 11419 | Summer Hab.           | Acres  | 19051 |
|                    |       |       | Winter Hab.           | Acres  | 19051 |
| Range              |       |       |                       |        |       |
| Existing Obligated |       |       | Significant Fisheries |        |       |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0     | Stream Miles          | Miles  | 149   |
| Allotments         | No.   | 0     |                       |        |       |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 0     | Stream Habitat        | Hab.ac | 301   |
| Existing Vacant    |       |       | Lakes                 | No.    | 0     |
| Suitable           | Acres | 2090  | Lake Habitat          | Hab.ac | 0     |
| Allotments         | No.   | 1     |                       |        |       |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 190   | Water Developments    |        |       |
| Proposed           |       |       | Existing              | No.    | 0     |
| Suitable           | Acres | 0     |                       |        |       |
| AUMs               | AUMs  | 0     | Minerals              |        |       |
|                    |       |       | Hardrock Potential    |        |       |
| Timber             |       |       | Very High             | Acres  | 0     |
| Tentative Suitable | Acres | 31112 | High                  | Acres  | 0     |
| Standing Volume    | MMBF  | 394   | Moderate              | Acres  | 0     |
|                    |       |       | Low                   | Acres  | 34710 |
| Corridors          |       |       | Mining Claims         | No.    | 2     |
| Exist.& Potential  | No.   | 0     | Oil & Gas Potential   |        |       |
|                    |       |       | Very High             | Acres  | 0     |
| Wildlife - T & E   |       |       | High                  | Acres  | 0     |
| Bald Eagle         |       |       | Moderate              | Acres  | 0     |
| Habitat            | Acres | 0     | Low                   | Acres  | 34710 |
| Gray Wolf          |       |       | Oil & Gas Leases      |        |       |
| Habitat            | Acres | 0     | Leases                | No.    | 0     |
|                    |       |       | Leased Area           | Acres  | 0     |

#### IV. NEED

This area is similar to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in topography and vegetation.

Although there has been very little interest in making this area a wilderness, there has been considerable interest in keeping part or all of it roadless. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game recommends continued roadless management as elk winter range, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified this area as one that has potential for promoting gray wolf recovery. The Inland Forest Resource Council, a wood products industry organization, acknowledges the importance of key elk winter range, but suggests that timber harvest may have an important role in intensive management of winter ranges. Two comments were received on the Clearwater portion of the area between the Draft and the Final. Both comments advocated leaving the area roadless but no specific reasons were given.

Tables C1 and C2 on pages C-2 and C-3 show the location and proximity to other wilderness and population centers in Idaho, western Montana, and eastern Washington.

#### V. ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

##### A. MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS BY ALTERNATIVE

The effects of each management emphasis on the wilderness characteristics of the area are described in this section.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the Clearwater Forest alternatives have been fitted to the Nez Perce Forest alternatives on the basis of goals and objectives common to both alternative sets. The relationship between the two Forests' alternatives is shown in Table C-36.

For the Clearwater portion, roaded development prescriptions are elk winter; timber/wildlife-watershed; timber/visual-riparian; and timber/special. The special emphasis shown is for the unroaded portions of the Wild and Scenic River corridor and the Lochsa Research Natural Area.

Table C-36

Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area  
Management Emphasis by Alternative

|  |      | Alternatives (Thousand Acres) |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|--|------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Management   | NPNF | A                             | C      | D      | E      | F      | G, G1   | H, H1  | I      | J      | K      | L      | G      |
| Emphasis   | Clw  | (A)                           | (F)    | (B)    | (C)    | (D)    | (E, E1) | (I)    | (I)    | (I)    | (I)    | (J)    | (K)    |
| WILDERNESS   |      |                               |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce  |      | 0                             | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0       | 55 5   | 55 5   | 55 5   | 55 5   | 0      | 0      |
| Clearwater   |      | (0)                           | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)     | (34 7) | (34 7) | (34 7) | (34 7) | (0)    | (0)    |
|  |      | 0                             | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0       | 90 2   | 90 2   | 90 2   | 90 2   | 0      | 0      |
| NONWILDERNESS  |      |                               |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Unroaded Management                                    |      |                               |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce  |      | 55 5                          | 55 5   | 0      | 0      | 55 5   | 55 5    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 55 5   | 44 9   |
| Clearwater   |      | (0)                           | (4 5)  | (0)    | (4 5)  | (4 5)  | (4 5)   | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (4 5)  | (4 5)  |
|  |      | 55 5                          | 60 0   | 0      | 4 5    | 60 0   | 60 0    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 60 0   | 49 4   |
| Timber/Wildlife/Watershed,<br>Visual-Riparian, Special |      |                               |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce  |      | 0                             | 0      | 51 5   | 51 5   | 0      | 0       | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 10 6   |
| Clearwater   |      | (29 1)                        | (25 2) | (27 6) | (28 7) | (28 7) | (25 2)  | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (28 7) | (17 4) |
|  |      | 29 1                          | 25 2   | 79 1   | 80 2   | 28 7   | 25 2    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 28 7   | 28 0   |
| Protection   |      |                               |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce  |      | 0                             | 0      | 4 0    | 4 0    | 0      | 0       | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| Clearwater   |      | (5 6)                         | (1 5)  | (7 1)  | (1 5)  | (1 5)  | (3 6)   | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (12 8) |
|  |      | 5 6                           | 1 5    | 11 1   | 5      | 1 5    | 3 6     | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 12 8   |

(Table C-36 cont )

| Management                     | A      | C      | D      | E      | F      | G, G1   | H, H1  | I      | J      | K      | L      | G      |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Emphasis                       | (A)    | (F)    | (B)    | (C)    | (D)    | (E, E1) | (I)    | (I)    | (I)    | (I)    | (J)    | (K)    |
| Wilderness                     |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce                      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0       | 55.5   | 55.5   | 55.5   | 55.5   | 0      | 0      |
| Clearwater                     | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)     | (34.7) | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    |
|                                | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0       | (90.2) | 55.5   | 55.5   | 55.5   | 0      | 0      |
| Nonwilderness                  |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Developed - Decade 1           |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce                      | 0      | 0      | 1.0    | 1.0    | 0      | 0       | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0.5    |
| Clearwater                     | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)   | (0)    | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (0.5)  | (1.6)  |
|                                | 0.5    | 0.5    | 1.5    | 1.5    | 0.5    | 0.5     | 0      | 0.5    | 0.5    | 0.5    | 0.5    | 2.1    |
| Developed - Decade 5           |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce                      | 0      | 0      | 55.5   | 55.5   | 0      | 0       | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 10.6   |
| Clearwater                     | (34.7) | (30.2) | (34.7) | (30.2) | (30.2) | (30.2)  | (0)    | (34.7) | (34.7) | (30.2) | (30.2) | (30.2) |
|                                | 34.7   | 30.2   | 90.2   | 85.7   | 30.2   | 30.2    | 0      | 34.7   | 34.7   | 30.2   | 30.2   | 40.8   |
| Roadless - Decade 1            |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce                      | 55.5   | 55.5   | 54.5   | 54.5   | 55.5   | 55.5    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 55.5   | 55.0   |
| Clearwater                     | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2)  | (0)    | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2) | (34.2) | (33.1) |
|                                | 89.7   | 89.7   | 88.7   | 88.7   | 89.7   | 89.7    | 0      | 34.2   | 34.2   | 34.2   | 89.7   | 88.1   |
| Roadless - Decade 5            |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Nez Perce                      | 55.5   | 55.5   | 0      | 0      | 55.5   | 55.5    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 55.5   | 44.9   |
| Clearwater                     | (0)    | (4.5)  | (0)    | (4.5)  | (4.5)  | (4.5)   | (0)    | (0)    | (0)    | (4.5)  | (4.5)  | (4.5)  |
|                                | 55.5   | 60.0   | 0      | 4.5    | 60.0   | 60.0    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 4.5    | 60.0   | 49.4   |
| Total Acres - Nez Perce = 55.5 |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| - Clearwater = 34.7            |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Total Roadless Area = 90.2     |        |        |        |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |

\* This roadless area is contiguous with the Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) Letters and numbers in parenthesis represent the alternatives and acres on the Clearwater Forest (Clw)

Alternative G, (K) = Preferred Alternative



## B. IMPACTS

### 1. Designation: Wilderness Management Emphasis: Wilderness

All of the Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area is recommended for wilderness classification in Alternatives H and H1. Alternatives I and J recommend the Nez Perce portion only. This recommendation would increase opportunities for primitive recreation, and allow ecosystems in the area to be affected by natural processes only.

Timber management possibilities, including harvest of approximately 706 MMBF (312 MMBF from Nez Perce portion) now present in the area, would be foregone.

Some existing uses, such as use of motorized equipment, would have to be terminated, but grazing at existing levels would be allowed to continue.

Big-game habitat improvement programs that involve prescribed burning on winter ranges would have to rely on unplanned ignitions unless current regulations are changed.

Only valid mining claims and mineral leases in effect either at the time of designation or as stated in designation legislation could be developed. All other lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Mineral development would be costly due to access constraints and other restrictions required to protect wilderness values.

Effects of wilderness management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Scenic views and natural landscapes would be maintained.
- Threatened and endangered species habitat and security would be protected.
- Opportunities for semiprimitive recreation would change for that part of the area within three miles of motorized use and to primitive for the rest of the area.
- The need for coordination between habitat management and other management would be low, especially if restrictions were put on Road 317. Animals would be more secure than under any other management emphasis. Habitat improvement programs using prescribed fire would be limited to unplanned (lightning) ignitions, and wildfire could play a more natural role. However, unplanned ignitions may not be sufficient to maintain or enhance winter range. Elk summer habitat would be managed at nearly 100 percent of potential.
- Anadromous and resident fish habitat potential would be maintained. High water quality would be maintained in all streams.
- Percentages of old-growth habitat in wilderness would be the highest possible, since no timber harvest would occur. Present diversity would be maintained.

- Special areas would be protected.

In general, nonpriced resource values are enhanced by wilderness management. The major nonpriced outputs considered by the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forests are maintenance of traditional lifestyles, community stability, threatened and endangered species (T & E) habitat, cultural resources, semiprimitive recreational opportunities, big-game habitat, visual quality, anadromous fish habitat, old-growth-dependent species habitat, and wilderness. The Clearwater Forest also considers special areas (Wild and Scenic River Corridors and Research Natural Areas), and resident fish habitat.

Traditional lifestyles would be maintained and community stability would be within parameters for rapid change in all alternatives; however, wilderness classification precludes timber harvest, and the wood products industry would not benefit under this emphasis. Industries relating to primitive recreation would benefit. Individuals and groups advocating increased wilderness acreage would be supported; those advocating roaded development would not be supported.

## 2. Designation: Nonwilderness Management Emphasis: Unroaded Management

Between 4 and 70 percent of Rackliff-Gedney area is assigned to this management emphasis in all alternatives except H and H1, which recommend the entire area for wilderness. All of the Nez Perce portion of the area is assigned to continued unroaded management in Alternatives A, C, F, G, G1, and L. Since the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor is inside of the roadless area (the Selway corridor is not), 3,500 acres would remain roadless in all alternatives except H and H1. In Alternatives C, E, F, G, G1, K, and L, 4,500 acres would remain roadless along the ridgetop in the vicinity of Coolwater, Fire, and Andy's Lakes in the Clearwater Forest.

Effect of an unroaded management on nonpriced resource values are:

- The natural landscape would be maintained to provide a semiprimitive/primitive setting for recreation.
- Possibilities for a rapid inventory of cultural resources would be reduced because of difficult access. Disturbance of sites would be minimal.
- Big-game improvement programs requiring planned fire ignitions could be accomplished. Elk summer habitat would be managed at nearly 100 percent of potential. Animals would be secure.
- Anadromous and resident fish habitat would be protected.
- Unroaded management would provide more than adequate habitat for old-growth-dependent species. Overall vegetative diversity would tend toward old growth.
- The values of Wild and Scenic River corridors and the Lochsa Research Natural Area would be enhanced.

Continued unroaded management of large roadless acreage has effects on nonpriced resource values that are similar to those of wilderness management. The major nonpriced outputs considered by the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests are maintenance of traditional lifestyles, community stability, threatened and endangered species (T & E) habitat, cultural resources, semiprimitive recreational opportunities, big-game habitat, visual quality, anadromous fish habitat, old-growth-dependent species habitat, and wilderness. In addition, the Clearwater Forest lists outputs for special areas (Wild and Scenic River corridors and Research Natural Areas), and resident fish habitat.

Traditional lifestyles would be maintained and community stability would be within parameters for rapid change in all alternatives. Timber and mining industries would not be supported under this management emphasis since no development is planned. Minerals exploration and development could take place but costs of such activities would be higher due to access constraints. Removal of common variety minerals would not be permitted. Wilderness advocates also would not be supported, since no part of the area is recommended for classification.

3. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Timber/Wildlife/Watershed,  
Visual - Riparian Special

Because the Nez Perce Forest's Management Prescriptions are grouped differently than the Clearwater's for this roaded area only, all those management emphasis that permit timber management, are grouped together. For the Clearwater, this includes timber/wildlife-watershed, timber/visual-riparian, and timber/special. The acreages in Table C-35, however, reflect the individual groups as shown for other roadless areas on the Clearwater.

Between 25,200 acres (28 percent of the area) and 76,600 acres (85 percent of the area) are assigned to this management emphasis in all alternatives except H and H1, which recommend the entire area for wilderness. General environmental effects would be those described in Chapter IV.

Approximately 706 MMBF of standing timber volume would be available for harvest over the full range of nonwilderness alternatives. Range developments could be constructed, and motorized equipment used.

Between 500 and 1,500 acres, less than 2 percent of the area, would be opened to roaded development in the first decade. Entries would be made from Road 317, which would require substantial reconstruction for use as a log haul road. The Clearwater Forest would enter Area 1841 in Section 4, T32N, R7E, opening the Lottie Creek drainage. The Nez Perce Forest would depart from Road 317 in Section 2, T32N, R7E, to open the head of Johnson Creek.

Alternative G, the preferred alternative of the Nez Perce Forest, would open 500 acres to roaded development, all in the Clearwater National Forest.

Wilderness possibilities in the roaded part of the area would be foregone; however, over 88,000 acres of the Rackliff-Gedney would remain unroaded at the end of the first decade.

Effects of the roaded management on nonpriced resource values are:

- Visual quality would change in response to specific visual quality objectives, from retention to partial retention on some lands to modification and maximum modification on others. Visual quality would be lowered on all roadless lands opened to development. More roads and harvest activity would be visible from high points in the area and possibly from U.S. Highway 12, but stream bottoms would be largely unaffected.
- Semiprimitive recreation would decrease as roadless areas are brought under roaded management. Roaded natural settings would increase, and hunter access would also increase.
- Roaded development would provide for a more thorough cultural resources inventory, but increased disturbance of sites caused by easier access would be likely.
- As roadless areas are brought under development, greater coordination would be needed between road construction and big-game habitat management. Logging has the potential for altering the amount and distribution of cover and forage areas and changing elk movements, distribution, and habitat utilization. Effects of roaded development on elk summer habitat would be mitigated using the North Idaho Elk Coordinating Guidelines on a project-by-project basis.
- Winter ranges would be improved through timber harvest where site preparation is designed to emphasize browse production and natural tree generation.
- Potential for human intrusion into T & E habitat would increase with roaded development, and project-level coordination among timber harvest, road construction, and habitat management would be required. Bald eagle habitat in the Lochsa and Selway River corridors would be unaffected. Area 1841 is potential gray wolf and grizzly bear habitat, which may be affected by management activities. Adequate security and an adequate prey base would be maintained.
- Old growth habitat would be reduced, but not below minimum management requirements. Vegetative diversity would tend toward seral successional stages in the timber harvest areas. Snags along the ridgetop used by cavity-dependent species would be undisturbed.
- Increased sedimentation and resultant adverse effects on fish habitat would be likely in streams adjacent to road construction. However, at least 60 percent of predicted sediment from any activity would be mitigated, and greater mitigations would be possible with application of best management practices on favorable landforms.

The major nonpriced outputs considered by the Nez Perce National Forest (Chapter II, Section 18) are maintenance of traditional lifestyles, community stability, threatened and endangered species (T & E) habitat, cultural resources, semiprimitive recreation, big-game habitat, visual quality, anadromous fish habitat, old-growth-dependent species habitat, and wilderness. In addition, the Clearwater Forest lists outputs for special areas (Wild and Scenic River Corridors and Research Natural Areas), and resident fish habitat.

Traditional lifestyles would be maintained and community stability would be within parameters for rapid change in all alternatives. Timber, mining, and livestock industries would benefit from this management emphasis; industries relating to primitive recreation would not benefit. Minerals exploration and development costs would be lower due to improved access. New aggregate sources would be developed as needed by new road construction. Individuals and groups advocating roaded development would be supported; those advocating wilderness would not be supported.

4. Designation: Nonwilderness  
Management Emphasis: Protection

This prescription emphasizes protection of soil and water values. This emphasis is assigned from 1,500 to 11,100 noncontiguous acres in alternatives which contain roaded development prescriptions.

Since roads may or may not be built, opportunities for wilderness assignment may or may not change; however, unique qualities of these areas should be retained or only moderately impacted.

Effects on nonpriced resource values would depend on whether or not roads are built. If they are, effects would be similar to those of roaded development. If they are not, effects would resemble those of unroaded management. From the standpoint of potential wilderness possibilities, it should be assumed that areas with a protection management emphasis would eventually be roaded.

Minerals exploration and development could take place but these activities would have slightly higher costs.